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Arab-Israeli Talks

Rabin To Change Negotiating Method If Talks Fail

TA2812185693 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Excerpt] The Israeli and PLO delegations are currently meeting in Cairo with the Egyptian foreign minister in a bid to bridge over their differences. No progress has yet been made on the dispute over the border crossings in the talks which began this afternoon. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has decided that if the Cairo talks fail to lead to an agreement he will change the negotiating method, and instead of meetings between delegations, Rabin will send personal emissaries to Yasir 'Arafat. [passage omitted]

Musa, Peres Discuss 28 Dec Meeting With Mubarak

NC2812130093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1100 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 28 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that during the meeting today between President Husni Mubarak, Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, and Israeli Environment Minister Yosi Sarid developments on the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the implementation of Gaza-Jericho agreement were reviewed.

In a statement made after the meeting, which lasted about one hour, the foreign minister expressed hope that the Israeli and Palestinian delegations will achieve positive results during their meeting today.

If the two sides fail to reach an agreement on the disputed issues today, the negotiations will continue tomorrow, Musa said.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres praised Egypt's role in the negotiations. Egypt is not only hosting the talks in Cairo, but is playing an important behind-the-scenes role to bring viewpoints closer and facilitate the negotiations between the two sides, Peres said.

He thanked President Mubarak and the Egyptian Government for presenting proposals to remove the obstacles and play one of the most positive roles.

The Israeli foreign minister expressed hope for achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East; establishing good relations between Israel and the states of the region; and putting an end to wars, violence, terrorism, and the arms race.

He also hoped that the sons of the region will enjoy a better life, saying that this is not only a political objective but a human and economic one as well.

We are now in the middle of the peace process and will not stop before we realize our ambitious objectives, he said.

Asked about the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said that he did not want to give an exaggerated rosy picture, but at the same time he did not want to overestimate the differences.

He said that there is a chance for an agreement. The talks yesterday, today, and possibly tomorrow, Musa said, will provide an opportunity to address the three or four disputed points and reach an agreement over them.

Answering a question, Peres said: We decided to negotiate with the PLO, not inside the PLO. We will not interfere in the internal affairs of the PLO and the decision is left to them."

He added: Israel believes that the PLO is the party that agreed to negotiate peace. He expressed belief that the party that agreed to negotiate for peace represents the majority of Palestinians.

What happens inside the PLO, Peres said, concerns the PLO, not Israel.

Asked whether he expected to reach an agreement during the current round of negotiations with the Palestinians, Israeli Foreign Minister Peres said that his hopes have no bounds.

On whether he expected to reach an agreement at the end of the meetings between the Palestinian and Israeli delegations, he said: We are discussing how to make the negotiations a success, not how to hinder them.

Answering a question on Egypt's role and whether it puts pressure on the two parties to reach an agreement, Peres said: We talk like friends. There might be a dispute between us and the Palestinians, but it is only fair to note that we want to reach an agreement.

He added: Our most important interest is Israel's security. But, on the other hand, with all due respect to the Palestinians, we have the right to negotiate. We are not in any hurry. The most appropriate way is to proceed from the Declaration of Principles we agreed on in Oslo and to realize that.

'Amr Musa expressed his hope that the proposals the Palestinians and Israelis submitted will lead to resolving the differences between them.

The foreign minister denied that Egypt offered any suggestions to the two sides.

Answering a question on the Palestinian threat to withdraw from the talks if they do not lead to any result, 'Amr Musa said: I have not heard anything like this before. On 'Arafat's visit to Cairo tomorrow, Wednesday, 'Amr Musa said: We are waiting for him soon. However, he added, I do not know if that will be tomorrow or some later date.

Answering another question on whether President Mubarak's talks with Peres today addressed the Syrian-Israeli talks, the foreign minister said: Of course. President Mubarak discussed this subject with Peres.

Subcommittee Set Up To Iron Out Differences

TA2812173893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Our correspondent in Cairo Arye Gus reports that the Liaison Committee has decided to set up a subcommittee to iron out the differences in the talks. The subcommittee will be headed by Major General Amnon Shahaq and Abu-al-'Ala'[Ahmad Quray']. Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres conferred with Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] and the two are due to confer again tonight. The Cairo discussions will continue tomorrow and our correspondent says it is a hint that there is a chance that progress is possible.

'Abbas, Peres Chair Liaison Committee Meeting

To Continue Talks 29 Dec

NC2812194393 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1910 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 28 Dec (MENA)—The Palestinian-Israeli Liaison Committee met in an evening session today under the chairmanship of PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met earlier with the Palestinian and Israeli delegations at their place of residence in a Cairo hotel.

The Liaison Committee will discuss ways of surmounting the obstacles to the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles, notably the issue of control over the crossings between Gaza and Egypt and Jordan and Jericho, the security of settlements, and the size of the Jericho area.

The committee, which also met this morning, will continue its meetings tomorrow, Wednesday.

'Limited Progress' Reported

NC2912071993 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] The Palestinian-Israeli talks on Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area ended early this morning amid reports of limited progress in overcoming the three main contentious points.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met the Palestinian and Israeli delegations to the talks to discuss the means to overcome the obstacles to the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles. Mahmud 'Abbas, head of the Palestinian delegation to the negotiations, said the talks are progressing well.

REUTER cites an Israeli official as saying that the two sides are progressing toward a formula.

Border crossings, the size of the Jericho area, and the Israeli forces' redeployment are the main points of contention.

The two sides are expected to resume their meetings in Cairo this morning.

Talks Resume; Sources Comment

NC2912094893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0845 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—Meetings of the Palestinian-Israeli Liaison Committee chaired by PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres resumed in Cairo today. The conferees are trying to reach compromise solutions to the problems delaying the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles and the start of the transfer of self-rule to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.

Sources close to the negotiations told MENA that noticeable progress was made at the session of talks from 2000 until after midnight last night. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Egypt's Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni attended that session as part of Egypt's efforts to bring views closer and remove the obstacles that still block the three disputed issues: border crossings between Gaza Strip and Egypt and between the Jericho area and Jordan, the settlements' security, and the definition of the size of the Jericho area.

The same sources said the two delegations yesterday held two general meetings in addition to meetings of the subcommittees to discuss each side's ideas and proposals on security issues and the transfer of civilian authority to the Palestinians.

The sources added that if things continue this way, the committee meetings will end today with a meeting with President Husni Mubarak to brief him on the outcome. Afterward, a drafting committee will compile a list of what has been agreed upon in preparation for a summit in Cairo between Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin sponsored by President Husni Mubarak to announce the start of the transfer of civilian authority to Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho.

'Arafat Reportedly Rejects Israeli Proposals

NC2912093393 Paris AFP in English 0912 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Amman, Dec 29 (AFP)—The Palestinians have rejected Israel's latest proposals on breaking the deadlock in their negotiations on launching Palestinian self-rule, a PLO official said Wednesday [29 December].

"The Israeli proposals do not even meet the minimum requirements of the Palestinians concerning the control of crossing points and the size of Jericho," Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, the PLO representative to Jordan, told AFP.

He said "the Palestinian side has refused them," in the negotiations taking place in the Egyptian capital.

The Israeli offer was submitted to Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasir 'Arafat, during an overnight stop-over at Cairo airport, and he also turned them down, said 'Abd-al-Rahim.

Arafat, en route from Khartoum to his organisation's headquarters in Tunis, met the head of the Palestinian negotiating team, Mahmud 'Abbas, at Cairo airport, according to Egyptian officials.

"The negotiations have not made progress despite Egypt's efforts to unblock the situation," said 'Abd-al-Rahim. "Any information about a draft accord between the two sides is totally groundless."

The negotiations on implementing autonomy have been deadlocked on the control of international borders, the size of an autonomous Jericho region and security for Jewish settlements in Gaza.

Under the September 13 autonomy accord, the Israeli army was to have started pulling out of the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho by December 13.

'Abd-al-Rahim said the Israelis had proposed a solution for "only one crossing point with Jordan, the Husayn bridge."

"One passage is to be under Israeli control and another Palestinian, but without Jericho being linked. That amounts to total Israeli control," complained the PLO official.

For the Jericho region, Israel proposed autonomy for 60 square kilometres (24 square miles), up from an original 27 square kilometres but far below the PLO's initial demand for 365 square kilometres.

"The negotiations are to carry on Wednesday in Cairo but if there's no change in the Israeli proposals, these negotiations will not succeed," predicted 'Abd-al-Rahim.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, meanwhile, left the Cairo hotel where the talks were being held. He was going "to tour the town," one of his aides told journalists. [passage omitted]

Israel, Jordan Holding Parallel Talks on Bridges

TA2912110493 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 29 Dec 93 pp 1, 6

[Report by Pinhas 'Inbari]

[Excerpt] Israel and Jordan have opened a channel of communications parallel to the Israeli-PLO talks on the bridges issue. Israeli and Jordanian military personnel have reportedly already held one meeting on the matter. The United States encouraged the two sides to start these talks.

It is not known what issues are being discussed between the two sides: whether they are the same as or different from those being discussed between Israel and the PLO. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat To Meet Palestinian Group on Democracy

NC2812174593 Paris AFP in English 1618 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Tunis, Dec 28 (AFP)—Senior Palestinian officials pressing for more democracy in the Palestine Liberation Organisation are due to meet PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat here next week, a Palestinian official said.

The delegation will consist of seven Palestinians from the occupied territories and the diaspora, led by Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, a founding member of the PLO and chief negotiator at the bilateral talks with Israel in Washington, said the official, who requested anonymity.

The PLO executive committee was handed a petition 10 days ago signed by 120 Palestinian political figures demanding democracy and respect for human rights within the PLO and in Palestinian institutions due to be set up in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

At least six of the 12 members of the PLO executive committee supported the petition, the source said.

He named them as Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin, Sulayman al-Najjab, Jamil al-Surani, Yasir 'Amr, Samir Ghawshah and Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh.

'Arafat agreed to receive the delegation "under pressure," the official said.

Some members of the PLO leadership have also signed an internal memorandum criticising 'Arafat's grip on the PLO's apparatus and calling for more democracy in the organisation's affairs, another reliable source said.

On Monday [27 December] 'Arafat called on three youth leaders from his Fatah wing to reconsider their decision to quit, Palestinian sources said.

The three leading figures in the Palestinian uprising or intifada against the Israeli occupation resigned Sunday in protest at 'Arafat's decision to name a 13-member council to head Fatah operations in the Gaza Strip.

'Arafat said the three "had no reason to resign" during a telephone conversation with Sami Abu-Samhadana, head of Fatah's office in Gaza City and one of those who quit.

The PLO leader said the resignations had stemmed from a misunderstanding and promised "serious changes will be carried out" in the Fatah leadership in Gaza in order to satisfy the three.

'Arafat Urges Gaza Fatah Leaders Not To Resign

TA2812143993 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 28 Dec 93 pp 1, 7

[By 'Imad al-Ifranji, special to AL-NAHAR]

[Excerpt] Gaza—The Palestinian leadership has called on Fatah leaders in Gaza to withdraw their resignations and return to their jobs. The leadership promised them that fundamental changes will soon take place in the Palestinian arena.

Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and members of the Gaza Strip supervisory committee in Tunis yesterday evening contacted by phone some of the brothers who resigned, urging them to resume their work and stressing that there was no reason for their resignation.

The Fatah leaders explained their position to the Palestinian leadership, which was surprised by their resignations. The leadership hinted that an agreement had been reached with the Israelis in Paris and that some field command members abroad will be coming to Gaza to put things in order.

One of the Gaza youth leaders said that President 'Arafat and Abu-'Ali Shahin, a member of the Gaza supervisory committee, emphasized that Dr. Zakariya al-Agha was only responsible for elections in national institutions in Gaza and not for Fatah. [passage omitted]

Fatah Reportedly Opens Office in Bethlehem

TA2812200693

[Editorial Report] Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 28 December reports that "Islamic Jihad activist Muhammad Abu-al-Rish today turned himself in to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in Khan Yunus. The IDF later released him as a gesture to Fatah in view of the fact that Muhammad's brother, who was a Fatah activist, was shot dead last week. To date the IDF had only released Fatah members who turned themselves in."

The report goes on to quote official IDF sources as saying that "Muhammad Abu-al-Rish is a Fatah activist and not a member of Islamic Jihad."

Army affairs correspondent Alon Ben-David reports that "a large rally was staged at noon today in Khan Yunus by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] to celebrate the return of the deportees from Lebanon to their homes in the Gaza Strip."

He adds that "in downtown Bethlehem, a festive ceremony marked the opening of a Fatah office. Fatah members, some of them wearing uniforms, staged a procession which, contrary to what has been the custom in recent weeks, was not coordinated with the IDF. No soldiers were to be seen in the area, and the ceremony proceeded uneventfully."

Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 28 December notes that the aforementioned office was opened by members of the al-Shabibah youth movement. Correspondent in the territories Yoram Bin-Nur notes that "this is the third Fatah office to open in Bethlehem" and quotes local sources as saying that " 'Arafat allows every group of activists to open an office and get a budget in order to appease his men and avert tensions among Fatah members."

Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic at 1700 GMT on 28 December reports that "efforts by Mr. Mansur al-Shawwa to set up a municipal council in Gaza reached a dead end in view of the fact that most factions, mainly Islamic, object in principle to appointed officials."

Hebron Fatah Hawks Issue Warning to Ge'ula Kohen

TA2712120593 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 27 Dec p A3

[Report by territories correspondent Yossi Torpstein]

[Excerpts] Leaflet No. 2 of the Hebron Fatah Hawks group warns: "Ge'ula Kohen should know that we are lying in wait for her and her racist, extremist gang, which has come to set Hebron on fire."

The leaflet, which was distributed on 25 December, also says: "There will be no peace without the expulsion of the settlers from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The intifadah must be kept at a high level, and painful blows must continue to rain on the settlers. The circle of jihad between us will grow, and we shall threaten their security night and day through all possible forms of struggle."

The Fatah Hawks group in the Hebron region, which is considered "Abu-Jihad's [Khalil al-Wazir] fortress", devoted its leaflet, entitled "A Call for Steadfast Struggle and Confrontation Against the Settler Gangs," to issuing various instructions to the population with regard to the struggle against the settlers, with the emphasis placed on intifadah-style activities.

The Fatah Hawks declared that 1 January, Fatah Day, will mark an intensification of the battle against the settlers. Detailed instructions were given on how to assist local residents who live near the settlers in their struggle.

Wealthy residents were asked to contribute funds to support these residents and the Hebron Fatah organization. Property owners were asked to take 25 percent off the rent they charge in light of the difficult economic situation in the area.

Town residents were asked to increase their presence in the Cave of the Patriarchs to prevent the Jews from

taking over. The Fatah Hawks have also forbidden town residents to park their cars in the center of town, "so that our squads will have an easier job carrying out their operations (against the settlers working nearby)."

As in the first leaflet distributed by the Fatah Hawks approximately two weeks ago, this leaflet also calls for "national unity" and coordination between Fatah and the organizations that oppose the peace process: Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The two leaflets call for a fundamental organizational reform in Fatah activity and demand the expulsion of "suspicious elements who spread corruption in the organization's ranks and cast aside its principles, values, and history in order to empty Fatah of all content." [passage omitted]

Palestinian sources in Hebron expressed the assessment that the activity of the Fatah Hawks reflects the positions of the hardliners in the organization, who call for military activities and are represented by 'Abbas Zaki and Muhammad Jihad, the heads of the organization's "western sector" mechanism.

This faction of Fatah regards Abu-Jihad, 'Arafat's deputy who directed the armed struggle in Israel and was murdered in 1988, as its spiritual mentor.

U.S., Europe Assailed for Role in Autonomy Projects

JN2512123793 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 25 Dec 93 pp 21, 24

[By Riyadh Mansur]

[Excerpt] The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] has strongly criticized the U.S. and European concentration on economic development projects in the Palestinian autonomous area, saying that this emphasis is based on the assumption that what was lost on the national level can be made good materially. The Front voiced its awareness of the European role in and enthusiasm for these projects, through which Europe wants to salvage what it missed in the peace process.

[DFLP leader] Nayif Hawatimah told SAWT AL-SHA'B that the proposed development projects meet the need of only a narrow sector of comprachors and middlemen and that they completely contradict the interests of the vast majority of the Palestinian people. He said the current storm about these projects will die down. He said they will appear in their original colors as a pack of illusions and projects based on sand. This will exacerbate the contradictions surrounding the agreement of submission, he added.

Hawatimah, who was talking over the telephone from Damascus, expects that the number of Arab and Islamic states whose regional interests contradict with the Israeli-Palestinian agreement will expand. He noted that as the solution's Palestinian and regional aspects develop under Israeli supremacy, its effects on Arabs and Islamic countries will increase. Until now, they have been behind their fenses, far removed from this threat. These states will find themselves facing new economic and strategic factors with unsurmountable challenges.

Hawatimah said that the call for democratic reform in the PLO will not succeed except by adhering to the national consensus program that calls for the righ: of self-determination and establishing the independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. [passage omitted]

Cashflow Woes Frustrate Political Department

JN2812175493 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 25 Dec 93 pp 1, 4

[Report by Rashid Khashanah from Tunis]

[Text] Palestinian circles in Tunis are concerned about the PLO Political Department's fate as a result of the financial crisis affecting its headquarters in Tunis and its offices and embassies throughout the world, especially since the "Gaza-Jericho First agreement" signed by the PLO and Israel in Washington on 13 September does not grant the Palestinians any powers abroad during the five-year transitional period.

Officials in this department, considered the PLO's foreign ministry, told AL-HAYAH that the strangling financial crisis this department has been experiencing for more than six months has long frozen the disbursement of wages in the headquarters and the embassies. It has led to the closure of the guest house where the department used to receive PLO representatives and ambassadors when they visited Tunis. Palestinian ambassadors have begun to stay at their friends' houses in the Tunisian capital or at hotels.

It is noteworthy that so far the PLO has opened 95 legations and embassies throughout the world, and that the Political Department runs their financial and diplomatic affairs. This department used to receive an annual budget from the Palestine National Fund in Amman. It used to prepare its own budget according to the needs of both the headquarters and embassies. The department is now linked to the fund's branch in Tunis. It receives wages and allowances for only the daily expenses listed in invoices. It, however, does not receive any credit funds for its various activities.

A senior department director estimated that its annual budget has retreated by 50 percent. He wondered: How can we meet the monthly wages of 1,500 employees working in the PLO's offices and embassies throughout the world? He pointed out that the difficult circumstances PLO offices are experiencing have made it almost impossible for these offices to continue carrying out their diplomatic missions as long as their private budgets are frozen. These budgets include the rents of

offices and houses for some employees, telephone bills, and the gasoline allowance. This director added: If our representatives in the states hosting Arab League offices had not received their wages from the Arab League, we would have been compelled to close many of our offices as a result of the financial crisis. These are offices in Rome, Paris, Madrid, London, Geneva, Moscow, Brussels, Bonn, Washington, New York, Tokyo, Delhi, Addis Ababa, and Brasilia. In Beijing the Palestinian ambassador does not receive his wages from the Arab League despite the recent opening of an Arab League office there.

The idea of closing several Palestinian embassies and representations is persistently discussed in the Political Department because there is no solution looming in the horizon for the financial crisis. Apparently, there is a ready plan to close several offices. However, implementation has been temporarily suspended after closing the Palestinian embassies in Mozambique, Gambia, and the Maldives.

As a result of the financial crisis, many ambassadors have transferred their residence to the embassies. Houses of several Palestinian ambassadors in some European capitals were sold, the telephone lines were cut, and the bills of ordinary embassy expenses were not paid for months.

The concern over the future has not vanished despite the fact that the Political Department's employees received their wages last week. Telephone bills were not paid on two successive occasions covering a period of six months.

A department official told AL-HAYAH that the financial crisis began after the second Gulf war and intensified at the beginning of last summer. He said: As a result, compensations for medical treatment have not been disbursed for the past two years, and only last week did we receive our wages for the past seven months.

The official added: We are the victims of focusing attention on the occupied territories and of placing all the PLO's financial resources at the disposal of the bodies being established in Gaza and the Jericho area. Is this designed to prompt us to leave Tunis, as was recently done by some Palestinian families, and to gradually dissolve the Political Department?

However, a senior PLO official indicated that the fifth article in the paragraph discussing the final situation in the Washington agreement says: It is understood that the negotiations on the final situation will address issues that include Jerusalem, refugees, and relations and cooperation with other neighbors. He came to the conclusion that there will be no future role for the Political Department because the neighbors of the Palestinian national authority are Egypt, Jordan, and Israel.

A director at the Political Department explained to AL-HAYAH that appointing [PLO Political Department chief] Faruq Qaddumi, also known as Abu-al-Lutf, as vice chairman of "the Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction" means that Qaddumi will be present in the territories, by virtue of his post. This once again poses the question of whether the Department's headquarters will remain in Tunis or will be transferred to Cairo or Amman.

Another Palestinian official said it is likely the Palestinian leadership will replace the Political Department with an Arab department set up as part of the bodies and departments that will be established in the territories. The official revealed that one of the recently appointed officials, Furayh Abu-Middayn, was appointed the official in charge of Arab affairs.

Amid this uncertainty, Palestinian circles in Tunis continue to express concern about the Political Department's fate because it is a form of sovereignty Palestinians agreed to postpone until after the transitional phase. Palestinians fear, however, that this department may be eroded and closed before this date. Perhaps, the crystallization of the plan to return to the territories in light of the detente in the ongoing negotiations in Paris on Israeli withdrawal will shed new light on the funds of this department which the Palestinians still call "the foreign ministry."

Peace Seen Endangered by Israeli 'Intransigence'

TA2812173393 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 27 Dec 93 pp 1, 7

[Editorial: "The Crossings—and Crossing to an Agreement"]

[Text] There are still conflicting reports about agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis regarding control over the crossings and borders. Palestinian officials are stating that following the Oslo and Paris talks, Israel finally conceded to the Palestinians participating fully at the crossing points. Israel backed down from its former position of considering control over the crossings part of external security and the responsibility of the Israeli Army. This shift means the role of effective partner has been conceded to the Palestinians, while Israel preserves the right to unobtrusively check those entering the self-rule areas. On the other hand, Israeli officials have stated that control over crossings and borders will remain in their hands, that no agreement had been reached over this issue, that bridging the gap was still a long way off, and that the upcoming Cairo talks slated to be resumed on 27 December will focus on the issue of control over the crossings. This is the issue that has been obstructing implementation of the peace accord between Israel and the PLO.

These conflicting reports have placed all the residents, without exception, in a perplexing situation embodied by the apparent confusion in the Palestinian street. There is no way of knowing what the reality is. Have the two sides reached a compromise agreement over the issue of the crossings and Israel's withdrawal from a 100 square km area surrounding the Jericho region? Or are these only hopes that will collide with reality at the Cairo

talks' table? Undoubtedly, the fact that this round of Cairo talks will be headed by Mahmud 'Abbas and Shim'on Peres, the two leaders who signed the Oslo accord in the White House on 13 September, provides a special significance to these talks.

Although we do not wish to pre-empt events by hinting that a climate of optimism hovers over the Cairo talks, there is unanimity that these talks will be harsh and difficult. The peace process is exposed to danger as a result of Israel's confiscation of Palestinian lands for the expansion of settlements, as if it is in a race against time to create a new reality before handing over the occupied territories to the self-rule authority. Although the Palestinians have displayed patience and endurance and have expressed their readiness to keep sitting with the Israelis despite those measures—which are a violation of the accord's spirit—the situation might reach a dead end whereby it will not be beneficial to continue these rounds if no progress or breakthrough is achieved in the implementation of self-rule.

All signs indicate that it is doubtful that the obstacles to implementing the accord will be overcome at the Cairo talks unless Israel abandons its unjustified intransigence. Therefore, while the eyes of the world are focused today on Cairo after having been focused on Paris and Oslo yesterday, everyone hopes the Israeli side will honor its declared commitments. Otherwise, the entire peace process will be exposed to danger and the fate of these talks will be similar to the Washington talks, following rounds that lasted two whole years.

Many of us wagered on a probable shift in Israeli policy toward a settlement and peace. However, the impasse in the talks revealed the depth of disagreements on issues that are fundamental to Palestinians. The interpretations over which Israel is persisting, by which it is trying to downplay the accord and render it subject to its own authority, contravene the Palestinian perception which considers self-rule a prelude to the restoration of rights, foremost of all the people's right to self-determination and establishment of their independent state.

Algeria

FIS Communique Urges Continued Armed Struggle

LD2812151793 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1500 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The clandestine leadership of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] has called for the continuation of armed struggle in Algeria. The communique has been received in Paris and appears in reply to official calls for dialogue advocated by the Algerian Government in order to resolve the political crisis which resulted from the cancellation of the legislative elections won by the FIS two years ago.

UGTA on Conference Document, Differences at Top

LD2812175193 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The national secretariat of the General Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA] revealed today its initial remarks on the national conference draft document. It stressed the need for the transitional period to rebuild the state.

The UGTA says it has noticed a serious gap in the draft document represented by the fact that it gives the impression that two heads exist for running the country's affairs—the head of state and the prime minister. It pointed out that the head of state has the right to sack the prime minister if he departs from the national accord document. It also mentioned that the draft document did not deal in depth with the social and economic guarantees during the transitional period.

National Dialogue Commission Completes Draft Platform

LD2512141593 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 25 Dec 93

[Text] In the context of the preparations for the national conference scheduled for next 25 and 26 January, it now seems that the national dialogue commission has concluded the process of preparing a draft platform that will be submitted to the parties to the dialogue at this conference. According to information received from information sources, the draft platform proposes to the partners in the dialogue a three-year transitional stage before returning to the electoral track. Our colleague Mohsen Slimani gives us the details:

[Slimani] The national dialogue commission seems to be making quick steps toward the clarification of the results of the series of meetings it has held with the parties to the dialogue, and according to reliable information the commission has now revealed a draft platform for a concord. The draft platform is meant to be a basis for a debate between the political partners and the representatives of the social forces in the framework of the national conference due to be held at the end of next month. According to the same source, the draft platform, echoing the dates fixed by the country's authorities, clearly stresses the need to go through a three-year transitional stage. As perceived by the commission, the proposals provide for the way of organizing the political institutions that will emanate from the national conference, namely the presidency of the state, the transitional national council, and the government. According to the draft platform, the presidential body will consist of a president, appointed at the national conference, and two vice-presidents. However, the president will be appointed on a proposal by the bureau of the conference, in consultation with the authority, or on a proposal by the national dialogue commission in consultation with the parties to the dialogue.

The president will play a prominent role and will exercise the full prerogatives provided for by the 1989 constitution. He will also appoint the prime minister and replace him in the event of the resignation of the latter. As for the transitional national council, it will consist of 180 members, will exercise its prerogatives defined in the context of the transitional stage, and will act by issuing legislative decrees. It will consist of appointed members from political and social forces as well as of national public figures. The essence of the draft platform considers that the objectives of organizing the transitional stage mainly concern the need to review order-related methods with a view to returning in due time to the electoral track after the amendment of the electoral laws, the law on political parties, and the law on information. It also considers that democracy is one of the decisive demands made by the people in the context of the national movement and is particularly embodied in the 1 November 1954 declaration.

Furthermore, the draft platform mentions the issue of transcending the previous line in dealing with the aspirations of the people to bring about the expected change and considers that the time has now come to separate the concept of state from that of the authority in place. The draft platform adds that the state is the property of all Algerians, even if the authority makes mistakes. According to the same source, the substance of the draft platform for concord underlines the need for the parties to the dialogue who were consulted to be committed to the proposed platform. The parties to the dialogue must observe some conditions in order to ensure the success of the decisions of the national conference with, among other things, a commitment to the republican nature of the Algerian state in the framework of Islamic values and the shunning of violence as a means to arrive at power, respect for the principle of alternation in the exercise of power, and avoiding the practice of politics in public places including mosques.

New Political Bloc Announces Group's Beginning

LD2412231393 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 24 Dec 93

[Text] The birth of the National Constitutional Bloc, which is made up of 12 political parties, was officially announced today at a news conference held by the representatives of these parties at the premises of the Popular Association for Unity and Labour. These parties announced the birth of their bloc after approving its basic statute at their meeting. They also agreed that the bloc should be led by an official of one of the parties alternately every two months. Mr. Mohamed Saadi of the National Boumedienist Front was appointed the current leader of the bloc.

This bloc is founded on 10 principles, including the unity of Algeria, the 1 November declaration, Islam as the religion of the nation and the state, commitment to the constitution, a multi-party system, alternation of power, and the building of a social democratic [as heard] republic.

According to a representative of one of the parties, each party will currently maintain its independence, while waiting for the emergence of a single political formation because the philosophical and ideological framework upon which the basis of this bloc has been established is the common denominator between the parties that have joined the bloc. The door is still open to other parties that may wish to join it.

In reply to a questions by newsmen, the representatives of the constitutional bloc revealed the stands of their grouping toward some issues. They affirmed the need for the national conference, scheduled for 25 and 26 January, to succeed and the need to assist the National Dialogue Commission to reach its desired objective, namely to bring about a reconciliation among all Algerians and put an end to the chain of violence.

As for including the dissolved Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] in the dialogue, a spokesman for the bloc affirmed the need to let all political forces take part in the dialogue.

Media Report Clashes Between Terrorists, Security

Assailants Assassinate Writer

LD2812165093 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1600 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The writer and poet Youcef Sebti, aged 42, had his throat slit by two unidentified men at the agricultural institute where he was a lecturer. The institute is situated in an eastern district of Algiers, a stronghold of the Islamists. He was an Algerian surrealist poet influenced by Jean Senac, who himself was assassinated in Algiers some 10 years ago.

This new assassination came at a time when the clandestine leadership of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] is calling for continuation of armed struggle. Here is Alain Menargues from Algiers:

[Menargues] The 43rd communique of the FIS, very toughly worded and three pages long, said a categorical no to dialogue, and issued a warning to those who might be tempted to negotiate with the Algerian regime. The communique rejected the government's opening proposals for a national dialogue. After a very firm condemnation of—I quote—the arbitrary junta supported by arrogant foreign states and the army, the FIS calls on the Algerian people to demand an Islamic regime, calls on fighters to continue jihad and on the Islamists to unite.

Algerian-Belgian Couple Found Murdered

NC2912113393 Paris AFP in English 1108 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Algiers, Dec 29 (AFP)—An Algerian-Belgian couple were found murdered Wednesday [29 December] at their home in Bouira, southeast of the Algerian capital, Algerian security services said.

No other details were immediately available.

More than 20 foreigners have been murdered since the end of September amid a Muslim fundamentalist campaign launched after a government crackdown on Islamic militants.

Forces Kill One Terrorist

LD2812215393 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The security services said that they killed a terrorist and arrested 78 others in the provinces of Constantine and Boumerdes. Sixty of these were arrested in the outskirts of Khemis El Khechna. The security forces recovered eight stolen vehicles and large quantities of spare parts.

Eight Terrorists, Two Policemen Killed

LD2712202593 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 27 Dec 93

[Text] Security sources have said that seven terrorists were killed between Thursday [23 December] and Sunday in Batna, Skikda, Blida and Algiers. They have also said that last Thursday two terrorists assassinated a policeman in al-Yanabi quarter in Bir Mourad Rais. One of the terrorists was killed during the assassination operation.

Egypt

Soldier Killed, Policeman Wounded in Shooting

NC2812203293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1945 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 28 Dec (MENA)—A soldier was killed and a warrant officer from al-Jizah Police force was injured in an accidental shooting this evening. The officer in charge of a police detail in the area where the incident occurred asked a minibus to stop after he saw two young male passengers harassing female university students.

While the officer was arresting the two young men, bullets were fired from his pistol, killing soldier 'Isam 'Abd-al-'Aziz and lightly wounding Warrant Officer Sabri Muhammad Mansi. [sentence as received]

The two minibus passengers were referred to the Prosecutor's Office for interrogation.

[Paris AFP in English at 1918 GMT on 28 December carries the following Cairo-datelined report about the incident: "A suspected Muslim fundamentalist, who with two others was asked to produce identification papers, late Tuesday shot dead a policeman and wounded another in al-Jizah south of Cairo, police said.

["The attack occurred when officers pulled over a minibus in front of a police station in the working class district of Bulaq al-Dakrur for a routine identification check.

["One of the two passengers pulled out a gun and opened fire on the policemen, killing one instantly and wounding the other, they said.

["The assailant managed to flee with his weapon but the police arrested the other passenger and the minibus driver, the police said.

["Authorities fanned out through the district in search of the killer while the two other men were taken in for questioning, they added."]

Interior Ministry on Shooting

NC2912064493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2225 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 28 Dec (MENA)—An Interior Ministry statement issued tonight said that while First Lieutenant Ahmad al-Wakil, chief of the radio patrol division at Bulaq al-Dakrur Police Station, passed in front of the station at 1700 today, he noticed two young men in a public transport minibus harassing young women in the street. When he tried to arrest them, they sped away in a vehicle with license plate number 1930-al-Jizah.

The statement added: The lieutenant informed his station by radio and his colleague Lieutenant Muhammad Zikri pursued the vehicle aided by Warrant Officer Sabri Muhammad Mansi and police conscript 'Isam 'Abd-al-'Aziz. They stopped it in Murad Street, al-Jizah. While Lt. Zikri was apprehending the two suspects, two bullets were fired accidentally from his pistol. One hit the warrant officer and the other hit the conscript 'Isam 'Abd-al-'Aziz, who died.

The Interior Ministry statement said the two suspects who were arrested were identified as Shawqi Sa'id Ibrahim Hanna, an employee at the Ghabbur Bros. Company, and Amjad Philip Kusa Sa'dallah, a driver. The Prosecutor's Office was informed of the incident so that it could begin to investigate.

Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah Claims Attack on Tourists

NC2812160193 Paris AFP in English 1343 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Paris, Dec 28 (AFP)—An underground Islamic fundamentalist group in Egypt on Tuesday [28 December] claimed responsibility for the bomb and gun attack on a Cairo tour bus that wounded eight Austrians.

The al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah said Monday's attack in Misr al-Qadimah, after which the assailants shot and wounded eight Egyptians while fleeing the scene, was "in retaliation for the recent executions" of several al-Jama'ah members.

Al-Jama'ah claimed responsibility in a statement sent to the Arabic daily AL-HAYAH, which is published in several capitals.

At least 261 people have been killed since March 1992, when Islamic militants stepped up their violent campaign aimed at toppling the secular government of President Husni Mubarak.

The government has rounded up hundreds of suspects and hanged 23 Moslem fundamentalists since June.

Sidqi Syria Visit Linked to Mediation With Iran

PM2312165993 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Dec 93 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Damascus Informs Cairo of Results of Its Mediation With Tehran"]

[Text] Cairo, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Damascus has informed Cairo of the results of the talks held in Damascus recently by the Iranian delegation headed by Iranian First Vice President Hasan Habibi with regard to the consultations conducted between the two sides on the possibility of achieving reconciliation and normalizing relations between Cairo and Tehran.

Political sources have linked Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi's visit to Damascus, which he began the day the Iranian delegation left Damascus, with the new Syrian endeavors to achieve a new rapprochement between the two countries to bring an end to the disagreements.

Paper 'Confident' of Israeli-Palestinian Accord

NC2912083993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0602 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—AL-AKHBAR stresses that the nonimplementation of the Israeli-Palestinian Accord will enhance the opposition stance on both sides.

In its editorial today, it says there is a feeling that reaching agreement is more likely, because Israel's acceptance of withdrawal will boost the Israeli-Palestinian Accord's credibility.

The paper notes President Yasir 'Arafat's expectation that the meetings will progress, paving the way for the Israeli forces to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho on 15 January and ending the differences delaying the implementation of the self-rule agreement.

The paper points out that if the game of sticking to positions is a transient phase, we are confident that consultations on every track will continue to achieve a just and comprehensive solution in the region. The Arab parties are also coordinating on the start of a new round in Washington between the parties to the conflict to achieve positive results. Besides, the paper says, the Syrian-Israeli track will be boosted by the meeting in Geneva between Presidents Clinton and Hafiz al-Asad, something that will benefit the entire peace process.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Address to al-'Ujaylat Masses

LD2912023593 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2010 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Speech by Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi from his motorcade in al-'Ujaylat on 28 December—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, O sons of al-'Ujaylat, sons of Hamid and Rashid. O you who belonged to the movements of the companions and owned this land for more than 500 years. This land has become yours, handed down from grandfather to father. You defended it for hundreds of years, defended it at the price of precious blood and souls. It has not been affected by the aggression. You are, O brothers, the sons of an area... [pauses] the sons of al-'Ujaylat area, of which Libyan history and the history of all the nation are proud because it was the center of resistance against the Italian colonialists. [passage omitted]

And now, brothers, history is repeating itself. We are now confronting the same Christian Western empires who are coveting our lands and infringing upon our dignity and sovereignty. O brothers, we are prepared once again, we are prepared—we, the grandsons of those heroes, of those martyrs—we are prepared once again to offer blood and many sacrifices so that our banner may remain raised, our voices and heads high.

O brothers, we now tell them we will confront you [the West] with the masses, the trained, armed masses who are free on their own land. This is the land of our fathers, our grandfathers and was irrigated with their blood. We will not give up one grain of its soil.

We tell them that we are prepared once again to fight for years and years. We are armed people, free people. We can do as we did to Italy in 1911. We taught Italy a bitter lesson when we were unarmed and when Turkey was responsible for the defense of Libya. [passage omitted]

Here, O brothers, we address them, the infringing West, the arrogant West which believes that the land is in its hand. We tell it that it is planted with thorns and mines. The land has embers upon which you cannot put your feet down firmly. The only one who can put his feet down firmly on this land is he who owns it, who has made sacrifices for it and who was born on it. [passage omitted]

O brothers, the Westerners made a terrible mistake when they insisted on turning the Lockerbie problem into a political issue. If they had thought, if they had learned from lessons, they would not have fallen onto that dangerous, slippery path. They should have left the Lockerbie case a purely legal issue. Then they might have been able to try the suspects, to save their shameless faces. They might have been able to avoid the pothole they have fallen into if they had not made it a political issue.

As for the arrogance of imperialism - the arrogant, trivial and ignorant American Republican administration is what made America appear as such. France, which never learns what the people offered to destroy France and its empire. The Algerian people gave one and a half million martyrs. The American Republican administration of Reagan and Bush—this malicious, trivial, ignorant, adventurous administration is what made France become involved. We tell them once more: France sacrificed its own interest with Libya; France gave up its right to solve its problem with Libya bilaterally, because it submitted to America's orders.

Let France go wherever she wants. We have a legal claim. We reject trivialities and reject lies. We reject these fabricated accusations and cast them aside and declare that we are facing a new crusaders' campaign, a neocolonialism. We are prepared to engage in battle with the imperialists. We held up the olive branch, asked for friendship, asked for understanding, asked for a peaceful settlement, asked for mutual reconciliation and asked for friendship and amity to prevail between the peoples, yet, the colonialist and imperialist circles are bent on confrontation and clashes. We are for it. We are prepared. O America, O France, O Britain, we are prepared for the confrontation. We are prepared to clash. We the children and fathers of the heroes of al-'Ujaylat. [passage omitted]

We reject any infringement of our sovereignty, any harm to our citizens and any violation of our national law. Libyan law is above the law of the United Nations.

Libyan law is above international law, because it concerns Libya's sovereignty and its right to live freely on its territory.

All international laws must protect the independence of peoples, otherwise they would be in contradiction with the national laws of these peoples. Let them hear the voice of the masses [crowd heard chanting]. Brothers, with these chants and these endless marching masses you are reviving the Arab nation, a nation on which surrender was imposed, the nation that was obliged to forego its right to live, from the Ocean to the Gulf, the nation that has relinquished its Moroccan littoral to Spain, from Ceuta to Melilla, the nation that has relinquished Jerusalem, the first of the two Qiblas, it has relinquished it to the intruding foreigner, the nation that was obliged to abandon beloved Palestine and hand it over to Israel, recognizing and signing this abandonment. [passage omitted]

Palestine is being sold at an auction. [chanting heard: We give our souls and our blood for you O leader]

Those who yesterday were activists have now become cheap agents. They have sacrificed the masses, deceived the masses. The masses want freedom and confrontation, and these rulers are unable to resist in the battle for freedom. Because they are rulers they lack the determination to engage in a confrontation. They are submissive, prostrated, surrendering to the White House, the Elysee and the crown of Her Majesty. [passage omitted]

No one stood on the side of the Somali people. The Soviet Union did not stand on its side because the Soviet Union was finished. The Arab nation did not stand on its side... [sentence unfinished as broadcast due to an edited tape] [passage omitted]

Had the Iraqi people resisted they would have not been able to divide Iraq, capture Iraq, tread on the soil of Iraq and divide it into three states.

The bad moral and material situation experienced now by Iraq was the result of Iraq's non-resistance, no people's resistance. Iraq paraded a regular classic army which we exclude completely from the battle.

America, Britain, France, Western countries, and NATO believe that Libya might confront them with aircraft, radar units and tanks and these they will overpower, electronically confuse, and consequently Libya will surrender. No, Libya will not mobilize a single aircraft or a tank or a radar unit. It will mobilize the masses who are stronger than the aircraft, stronger than the tanks, stronger than the radar—the masses that the electronics cannot confuse. [passage omitted]

When the resistance begins in Libya, fire will start in North Africa and in the Middle East and all balances will be turned upside down and all previous calculations will be struck out. When resistance begins in Libya, resistance will begin everywhere, not only in the Arab world, but by all peoples which desire to live in freedom and dignity over the Earth and under the sun.

Brothers, we are facing a new situation, a situation which seeks to impose force instead of law. It wants force to prevail instead of legislation, instead of sovereignty. Force is now above the charter of the United Nations, above the Security Council, above the United Nations. Force can now change the UN charter at will. Well then, since the situation is now a chaos like this, and has become a matter of potential and capability, we too, with the power of our right on our own land, with the power of our determination and will, we too change what we want of the charter of the United Nations, of the United Nations, of the international legitimacy. We can be partners in the making of international legitimacy, in the making of any new international law. [passage omitted]

We have power. They believe that with a boycott, threats and state terrorism the Libyan people would abandon its sons, its national law, its sovereignty and right to freedom. It would be a humiliation, brothers, if we were to abandon our sons, if we were to abandon our national law. [passage omitted] Whether they like it or not we treat them on an equal footing. We do not believe in numerical superiority, in whoever owns the largest number of aircraft, tanks or aircraft-carriers. We measure all these matters in terms of who is right. [passage omitted]

We reject the false accusations which, before the world, have proved to be false and fabricated. What do the Security Council member states say now that all the witnesses of the Lockerbie case have said that Libya is innocent of this case. What does the Security Council say, if it is really an international Security Council and not a Security Council for the three western states only, what does it say now that the truth has transpired of the so- called Lockerbie case, now that the witnesses have declared that Libya is innocent, now that the families of the victims have declared that they have been misled, that the blood of their sons in Lockerbie has turned into a political issue, and to the settling of political accounts with the Libyan revolution. Now they [the West] ought to announce this: We are after Libya not because of Lockerbie, since the Lockerbie case has now been placed in doubt, but we are after Libya because it wants freedom on its soil. Let them declare this.

What do those who brag about human rights in the West say when two innocent Libyan nationals are being hunted in front of the world? They do not care about their human rights. Where are human rights when it comes to the two Libyan suspects, where are the human rights when a person is obliged to leave his own country by force. Are these human rights? [passage omitted]

You have been exposed you imposters. O imposters, you who trade in human rights, you have been exposed to the victims first and the American, French, British, European and international public opinions. They have been exposed.

The issue is not wanting to punish a criminal who committed a criminal act. The issue is one of exploiting this tragic accident to settle political accounts related to Arab unity, the Arab revolution, oil and colonialist aims. Those imposters who trade in the blood of Lockerbie, Pan Am, and UTA have been exposed. [passage omitted] They know who carried out this operation and received payment from him [not further identified] so as to accuse Libya because they did not receive payments from it. [passage omitted]

Our struggle and steadfastness will continue until imperialism is defeated, until the aggression is defeated.

Sudan

Persons Accused of 'Destructive Conspiracy' Summoned

EA2812213093 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1410 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Khartoum, 28 Dec (SUNA)—The special court trying those accused of involvement in the destructive conspiracy has decided to summon the accused who are absent to appear before it within a week of receiving their summonses. On this basis the court decided to adjourn until 13 January 1994. The chairman of the court said the decision was taken in conformity with the ruling of the court of appeal pertaining to the cancellation of the decision separating the case of the accused who are absent. He said the latter would be notified by way of a notice in the Sudanese consulate or embassy in their country of residence. The head of the prosecution said some of the accused were residing in Egypt and others in Kenya. The defense counsel informed the court that the defense would lodge an objection with the high court against the decision of the court of appeal not to separate the trial of the accused who are absent.

There are 17 accused who are absent, the most prominent of whom are Lieutenant General (Retired) Fathi Ahmad Ali, the former commander in chief of the Sudanese Army; Lt. Gen. 'Abd-al-Rahman Sa'id, the former chief of general staff for operations; and Major General (Retired) al-Hadi Bushra, the former chief of the security apparatus.

'Arafat Arrives in Khartoum To Brief Officials

EA2812164293 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, arrived in Khartoum from Yemen this afternoon. Following his arrival, his excellency told the radio correspondent that the purpose of his visit to Sudan was to brief the Sudanese officials on the obstacles obstructing the implementation of the agreement on Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. He will also brief them on the results of the meetings in Oslo and Paris and on the talks currently being held in Cairo.

In his statement, the Palestinian president said that views differed widely between the Palestinian and Israeli sides on implementing the agreement. He stressed the keenness of the Palestinian side to see the agreement fully implemented so that the Palestinian flag could be hoisted over the territory of Gaza and Jericho. Mr. 'Arafat went on to refer to the settlements being set up by the Israeli authorities, saying that this was an open violation of the agreement. He said he hoped that the Cairo talks would make palpable progress, following the failure of the talks in Oslo and France to make any progress worthy of mention.

His excellency was met at Khartoum airport by Dr. Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih, the foreign minister, Mr. Abdullah Hasan, the finance minister, and staff Lieutenant Colonel 'Abd-al-Rahim Muhammad Husayn, the interior minister.

'Arafat on Accord Implementation

EA2812204793 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Interview with Yasir 'Arafat, Palestinian president, by unidentified radio announcer; place and date not given—live or recorded]

[Announcer] Brother Yasir 'Arafat, is this visit being paid within the framework of briefing the Arab leaders on the latest developments affecting the current negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis? We would like to hear details of the differences which have arisen over the details of the agreement, especially those concerning passageways [ma'abir] and the Jericho area and the latest developments in this connection. Are there other areas of disagreement? We would also like to hear anything else.

['Arafat, laughing] We have come first to brief our brothers on [words indistinct] we met his excellency the president [al-Bashir of Sudan]. We discussed many things and listened to his good advice on all the issues affecting us as Palestinians, as the Arab nation with one interest, one (?faith) and one future. Naturally and without doubt [words indistinct] I shall brief his excellency on all the difficulties we encountered in the current negotiations in Oslo, Paris and those that began or were resumed yesterday in Cairo and which are continuing today.

There are, in fact, many issues constituting a wide gap between our viewpoints and the Palestinian [as heard] viewpoints, which confirms the need to implement honestly and precisely the agreement. What we are stressing at the moment is the need for implementation, precise and honest implementation of the agreement. We talk of withdrawal [preceding word in English], when we talk about withdrawal, there must be withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, and the Palestinian flag must be hoisted over the first liberated Palestinian land. Withdrawal—that term must be precise. When we talk about Jerusalem, then the (?standing) [izzat] of Jerusalem must end,

because it cannot be allowed (?under) the agreement at all that the (?standing) of Jerusalem continues.

The world witnessed the tragedy they tried to inflict in Bethlehem during the Christmas celebrations. The whole world witnessed what happened in Bethlehem—the attempt to pull down the Palestinian flag and even the intervention in Palestinian affairs and the attempts to (?distort) Palestinian-Christian [word indistinct]. Christmas is not just the property of Palestine, but the property of the whole world, particularly of Christians the world over.

Moreover, regarding the passageways, regarding the Jericho area, regarding the settlements, and the last thing that regrettably cropped up is their confiscation of 30,000 [dunams], that is to say 30,000 sqare kms [as heard] west of Jericho, west of the Ramallah area. This is a gross violation of the supposed agreement because these settlements were not supposed to expand while investigations are going on for a period not exceeding the beginning of the third year. Apart from those there are many other problems. I shall put all these matters before his excellency the president and I will listen to his views and good advice on them, God willing.

[Announcer] Are there any [word indistinct] concessions from the Israelis regarding the passageways and the Jericho area?

['Arafat] [Word indistinct] what concession? [passage indistinct]. What sort of concession? [passage indistinct].

[Announcer] What were the aims of the latest meetings, especially those in Versailles, and what new development are you expecting from the Cairo meeting?

['Arafat] Regrettably, nothing was achieved; no progress whatsoever was made either at Oslo nor at Versailles in Paris, but we hope that some move or other or some progress will be made during the current talks in Cairo.

Third Round of Ethiopian-Sudanese Talks Ends

EA2312164693 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 23 Dec 93

[Text] Vice President al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih said during the final session of the third round of the Sudanese-Ethiopian ministerial joint committee that the meeting confirmed the efforts of Sudan and Ethiopia to realize their mutual aspirations.

He said the Sudanese people and government had followed the proceedings of this round with intense interest in the hope that the meetings would serve to promote relations between the two countries. He said the results of the meetings clearly show that those relations and their future are positive and coincide with the two countries' efforts to entrench peace, stability, and development on the internal and regional levels in order to promote regional integration and to resolve conflicts. He noted the positive aspects that were reflected during the meetings, as manifested by agreements and action programs in all fields.

Major General al-Zubayr stressed the need to strengthen and [word indistinct] the mechanisms in both countries to transform the cooperation programs into palpable realities of benefit to the two peoples.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Tamirat Layne addressed the session on behalf of his country's delegation, expressing his appreciation for the generous hospitality they were accorded in Sudan and referring to the developing relations between the two countries and the common views on all issues discussed in order to realize the aspirations of the two fraternal peoples by way of further cooperation and brotherhood.

The signing of a joint communique marked the end of the proceedings of the Sudanese-Ethiopian committee. It was signed for Sudan by Vice President al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih and for Ethiopia by Prime Minister Tamirat Layne. Foreign Minister Husayn Abu-Salih read the communique at the start of the session.

Joint Communique Issued

EA2312200393 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1415 GMT 23 Dec 93

[Text] Khartoum, 23 Dec (SUNA)—The joint communique on the meetings of the third round of the proceedings of the Sudanese-Ethiopian ministerial joint ministerial committee held in Khartoum between 18 and 23 December 1993 was issued in Khartoum today. It was signed for Sudan by Vice President al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih and for Ethiopia by Prime Minister Tamirat Layne.

The communique states that the talks between the two sides were held in an atmosphere of mutual friendship and confidence and joint understanding. Bilateral, regional, and international political issues of joint interest were discussed, as was bilateral cooperation in the various economic, trade, and technical fields and the fields of cultural, information, educational, youth, and health interaction. In connection with the agreement between the foreign ministries of the two countries, the two sides expressed satisfaction over the constant efforts to effect its implementation and stressed the need for intensive contacts between officials to promote consultation and coordination.

The two sides reiterated their firm stand on the need to resolve the Somali problem by way of promoting reconciliation among the Somali factions. They stressed the importance of the role of the countries of the Horn of Africa in finding a political solution to the crisis.

The two sides hailed the transformation of the preferential trade area into the common market for the states of eastern and central Africa, reaffirming their commitment to taking action toward bringing the aims of that agreement to realization.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to finding a lasting solution to the problems of the refugees and continuing to engage in consultations with a view to organizing an international conference on helping the Horn of Africa with the problem of migrants and returnees.

On economic and trade matters, the communique said nine agreements and protocols had been signed on the fields of trade, investment, taxation and customs, with a view to encouraging trade and investment and curbing illegal trade.

In the field of water resources, the environment, and energy, the two sides agreed to cooperate in the fields of protecting land life [al-hayah al-barriyyah] and to control water catchment zones, electric power, and geology.

In the social and cultural field a protocol was signed providing for bilateral cooperation in the youth and sports sector, an agreement in the field of youth, a protocol for cooperation in the field of education, and an agreement on cooperation in the health field.

The communique said that agreement had been reached to hold the fourth round of the proceedings of the Sudanese-Ethiopian ministerial committee in Addis Ababa in 1994 at a date to be determined through diplomatic channels.

Ethiopian Delegation Departs

EA2312190593 Khartoum SUNA in English 1650 GMT 23 Dec 93

[Excerpts] Khartoum, 23 Dec (SUNA)—Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin said the third session of the joint Ethiopian-Sudanese ministerial committee was characterized by success because the two sides objectively discussed the real problems for reaching full and positive agreements. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Prime Minister Tamirat Layne and his accompanying delegation who participated in the third session of the joint Ethiopian-Sudanese ministerial committee held on 21-23 December left Thursday [23 December] to Ethiopia.

Foreign Minister on UN Praise for Relief Efforts

EA2812165793 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Dr. Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih, the foreign minister, has said that Sudan's unity is nonnegotiable and that Sudan had determined its destiny long ago. He said this at the Foreign Ministry's forum this morning. His excellency went on to refer to the resolution adopted by the UN's second committee, which had praised Sudan for dispatching relief aid as agreed upon during the period from November 1992 and the current session of the General Assembly. The foreign minister also referred to the visit of Mr. Vieri Traxler, the special representative of the UN secretary general for humanitarian affairs, from 7 to 14 December to evaluate the implementation of the agreement between Sudan and the United Nations on Operation Lifeline, stressing that relief materials had reached those in need in the south.

Dr. Abu-Salih expressed the government's condemnation of the move by the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum recently, which transgressed the bounds of diplomatic work, to honor the citizens who participated in the Juba incidents in October 1992, saying that this move ranked as a provocation inasmuch as the government had committed itself to forming a higher judicial committee to look into the cases of those citizens.

Also speaking at the forum was Ambassador Awad Muhammad al-Hasan, director of the economic cooperation department at the Foreign Ministry, who said there was an agreement between the government and River Transport Board on transporting relief materials. He said trains were being prepared to supplement transportation capacity.

Kuwait

Official Denies Envoys Sent To Pro-Iraq Countries

LD2712173693 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1528 GMT 27 Dec 93

[Excerpts] Kuwait, 27 Dec (KUNA)—Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, the first deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister, today denied that the State of Kuwait had sent envoys on secret missions to any of the countries that supported the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

This came within the course of his reply to a question by reporters after his meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committee at the National Assembly.

Some media have recently claimed that Kuwait had secretly sent envoys to a number of countries, including Tunisia and Jordan.

Regarding the call for the restoration of relations with Kuwait made by 'Ali Salim al-Bid, the Yemeni vice president, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad said that Kuwait has not severed its relations with Yemen, pointing out the continued existence of the Kuwaiti embassy in San'a. [passage omitted]

He [Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad] said that he discussed all matters related to Kuwait's foreign policy, in addition to the latest development in the region with the members of the committee.

Deadline for Departure of Iraqi Farmers Extended

LD2812143293 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0647 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Excerpts] Kuwait, 28 Dec (KUNA)— A Kuwaiti newspaper published here today said that the time limit for the evacuation of Iraqi farmers from Kuwaiti territories has been extended for five days to allow them to remove material used in the building of their houses, which are situated south of Umm Qasr.

The AL-QABAS newspaper quoted well-informed sources as saying that this measure by Kuwait came after the United Nations had asked for the Iraqis to be given more time to enable them fully to remove the houses that they had built within Kuwaiti territory.

'Abd-al-Latif Kabbaj, the spokesman for the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, has recently said that 100 Iraqi families who were living on Kuwaiti land have been evacuated to Iraqi territory and that the evacuation process will finish by the end of this month. [passage omitted]

In another development, the newspaper quoted Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Sulayman Majid al-Shahin as denying that Kuwait has paid any compensation to Iraqi farmers who were living on Kuwaiti territory. He pointed out that UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali has been briefed verbally on the outline of a report on this compensation, prepared by a specialist Swedish team assigned by the United Nations. Al-Shahin indicated that the report contains legal and technical outlines and points, including the method of payment and the kind of currency in which compensation is to be paid—whether in Kuwaiti dinars, Iraqi dinars, or any other currency specified by the United Nations.

UN Spokesman: Iraqi Families Returned

LD2912111893 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1035 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Kuwait, 29 Dec (KUNA)—The UNIKOM [United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission] official spokesman has stated today that all Iraqi families in Umm Qasr region have been removed from the Kuwaiti side of the border.

The UNIKOM spokesman 'Abd-al-Latif Kabbaj told KUNA in a telephone conversation that 175 families have been transferred to the Iraqi side of Umm Qasr. He stressed that there are no more Iraqi families on the (?Kuwaiti) side.

Kabbaj added that the former Iraqi residents [on the Kuwaiti side of border] are currently dismantling their water and electricity equipment and removing their belongings to the other side. He added: We expect the operation to end by 31 December; the Kuwaitis will be able to resume digging the border trench after New Year's.

Minister Urges Pressure on Iraq To Free Prisoners

NC2812141193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1220 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 28 Dec (MENA)—Habib Jawhar Hayat, Kuwaiti minister of communication and transportation, has urged Arab and other countries to pressure Iraq to abide by the UN resolutions and release the Kuwaiti prisoners held in Iraq.

In a statement here today on the sidelines of the meetings of the executive bureau of the Arab ministers of transport, the Kuwaiti minister said that Iraq's agreeing to receive the Arab League secretary general's envoy on the issue of prisoners is a propaganda campaign. He said the Arab League and international bodies have submitted memoranda urging Iraq to release the prisoners.

The Kuwaiti minister said his country has received nothing to indicate that Iraq acknowledges the presence of well over 600 Kuwaiti prisoners.

Asked about Iraq's decision to withdraw some Iraqi farmers from the border and whether this step is a prelude to recognizing the UN resolutions on the demarcation of borders, the Kuwaiti minister said: The UN forces are entrusted with implementing the UN Security Council resolution in this regard. He asserted that the Kuwaiti side, cooperating with the United Nations, had prepared the

border markers. He described Iraq's withdrawal of some farmers as a partial initiative, expressing the hope that the step would represent the beginning of recognizing the demarcation resolution and Kuwait's sovereignty over the land in accordance with UN resolutions.

United Arab Emirates

Foreign Minister Comments on Arab Boycott, Iran

94AE0049A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 21 Nov 93 pp 1,4

[Text] Abu Dhabi—UAE (United Arab Emirates) Foreign Minister Rashid Bin-'Abdallah al-Na'imi sees that all the options available to the UAE in the confrontation with the Iranian occupation of the islands of Abu Musa, the smaller Tunb, and the greater Tunb "remain peaceful options." He said the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] support for the UAE stand is based on the fact that these islands are Arab and that his country should claim Arab rights.

Minister al-Na'imi said that the UAE and Iran did not hold negotiations regarding the island problem, "but indeed contacts were held regarding the UAE's demand that negotiations on the islands should begin. But Iran did not agree with this request, and, in the meantime, has been carrying out actions on these islands that do not agree with a good-neighbor policy. He said he recently met with his Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Velayati in New York during the General Assembly session. He said their discussion dealt with starting the negotiations but the Iranian side did not respond to this demand.

The UAE foreign minister talked to a press delegation visiting the UAE on the occasion of celebrating the national holiday.

Asked if there are any new developments in the UAE stand on the Gaza-Jericho agreement and the Arab boycott of Israel, he said the GCC attitude toward the two issues is clear, "it supports the peace process. The GCC has indirectly participated in it since the Madrid conference. We have supported the agreement even before we saw the details, and before the PLO apprised us of the text, in the belief that negotiations are bound to lead the two parties to come to an agreement. We consider the agreement as a first step. We urge that this be followed by more steps on the other tracks." With regard to the boycott he stressed that "it depends on the consensus of the Arab countries." He said we have not seen anything substantial on the ground. Therefore we are waiting to see progress before we decide what is to be done with the Arab boycott which was imposed in certain particular conditions and was useful for the Arab cause."

He said the support of the Gulf countries is not affected by the attitude toward the PLO "because the Gulf countries have no stand toward the PLO, rather it is the PLO that took a stand against an important matter that concerns them. If anybody should be concerned with resisting occupation it should be the PLO. But instead the PLO supported the occupation of an Arab country and the expulsion of a people from its land. But our support for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause has not changed. Nobody should blame us for the attitudes of other peoples. Our hands in dealing with the PLO are clean. The GCC countries are in the forefront of those who support [economic] development in the occupied territories. He stressed that the UAE "did not hold any contacts with Israel on this subject."

Asked about the efforts being made to bring about an Arab reconciliation, he brought to mind the call by UAE President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan for "forgiveness" which, he said, met with great response. "But forgiveness and reconciliation remain a part of the reality of joint Arab action; it is a painful reality that does not encourage taking steps forward, for it was the injustice of kinsfolk that has scattered the Arab nation. Arab action was focused on the common enemy but the blow came from a nonenemy.... Therefore, joint Arab action is now in need of new priorities and revamping."

He said the UAE wants Iraq to "study the state of relations with the Arab countries and its primary commitment to Arab resolutions and covenants. Only then can bilateral relations between it and the UAE be considered."

He stressed that Damascus Declaration should be implemented in "the proper manner," adding that political coordination between the countries of the Declaration is "continuing." He added that "much has been said about this Declaration, such as, it is dying or has been buried. But as far as the UAE at least is concerned, it is a bright example of Arab cooperation. It is being implemented by all possible means and mutual consent." He said that the Declaration "could be useful for the Arab League as a working paper within the framework of the search for reconciliation."

Finally, he stressed that the question of Kuwaiti prisoners held in Iraq is an integral part of the international Arab situation, adding that "the Gulf people will never forget their brothers, nor will their efforts to solve their problem ever wane."

Reporting from Tehran, Reuter said that Iran yesterday appointed a governor for Abu Musa Island in the midst of the dispute with the UAE over sovereignty.

The official Iranian Islamic Republic News Agency said that minister of interior Ali Mohammad Besharati-Jahromi has appointed Hasan Rizai governor of the island but gave no further details regarding Rizai or who will replace him in his position.

On the other hand AFP said that Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani arrived in Tehran yesterday on a two-day visit. It said that Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati welcomed the Qatari minister. He will discuss with him political and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Gulf Sources Discuss Territorial Issue

94AE0049B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 23 Nov 93 pp 1,4

[Article by Wafa'i Diyab]

[Text] Abu Dhabi—Gulf diplomatic sources assert that developments of the dispute between Iran and the UAE (United Arab Emirates) over Abu Musa Island fully coincide with Iran's objective of affirming Tehran's claim that the Gulf is Persian. This objective was among the priorities of the post-revolution era. The sources say that the UAE has three options to peacefully restore the three islands. The sources say that Iran is exploiting recent developments, using them as a strong card in the attempt to exert pressure on some countries of the regio. They point out that Iran has moved on three levels, which are:

1. Evacuating the inhabitants of the islands and banning them from contacts abroad, under the pretext that conspiratorial foreign elements have been exposed.

2. Replenishing the vacuum created by bringing in more Iranian citizens and boosting the Iranian military effort under the pretext of securing the island. [sentence as published]

3. Appointing a military governor on Abu Musa Island with absolute powers and jurisdictions.

The same sources added that the problem has changed from being an Iranian-UAE problem to an Arab problem and is now likely to develop into an international problem, particularly if current political efforts failed to reach a peaceful solution.

While UAE Foreign Minister Rashid Bin-'Abdallah al-Na'imi told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the proposed options to solve the problem are all political, this does not prevent some people in Abu Dhabi from wondering with a low voice whether the regional and international conditions allow launching a "second Desert Storm" operation to liberate the three islands.

Legal sources say that Iran, by its recent actions in Abu Musa, has violated the contents of the memorandum of arrangements sponsored by Britain that it signed with al-Shariqah in November 1971. The memo, as the sources say, calls upon Iran and al-Shariqah to participate in the administration of the island. The memo does not contain any provisions determining the fate of the island and sovereignty of it. As for the smaller and greater Tunb Islands, they basically belong to Ra's al-Khaymah Emirate.

According to well-informed sources, Abu Dhabi has three peaceful options to deal with before considering any other solutions.

1. Taking the problem to the United Nations and the Security Council, in particular, which would require taking other steps, but are too premature to discuss now. But it is important to point out here that the islands' problem has officially been before the United Nations for quite some time. The UAE was expecting the arrival of the UN secretary-general to the area before it takes a decision on its next step.

2. Referring the case to the International Court of Justice, in which case Abu Dhabi will submit papers, documents, and historical deeds that confirm the Arab character of the islands and refute Iranian claims about Tehran's right to them.

3. Giving the mediation efforts by various Arab parties between Abu Dhabi and Tehran a chance to succeed before a final clash breaks out.

Most prominent among these parties are Qatar, the Sultanate of Oman, Syria, and others. It is observed that these parties say that they are carrying out undeclared efforts and good offices without calling them "mediation," believing that this would lead to better results in the end.

The same sources added that the diplomatic and political balance in the crisis is clearly in favor of the UAE, since it has won the full Arab and Gulf support following the support it won from the industrialized and Western countries.

The same sources say that direct negotiations with Tehran could be started as soon as the Iranian leadership shows the desire to discuss the essence of the problem, which is sovereignty over the islands. Anything short of that is just a waste of time. These sources consider the three islands to be of great strategic importance in the Gulf region because they are close to the Strait of Hormus, which is the oil route linking the Gulf with the rest of the world. Therefore, anybody in control of the three islands can actually exert pressure on some of the region's countries if he so wishes.

Therefore, Gulf sources warn against adopting a short-term policy in dealing with the problem, particularly against turning the problem of the islands into strictly a UAE-Iranian issue, which the Iranian parties are trying to do and which the Arabs reject.

The sources said that the danger in pursuing this policy lies in subjecting the determination of this problem to the balance of power, which at present is in favor of Iran. But the same sources point out to a series of positive points in favor of the Arab stand vis-a-vis the Iranian actions in the islands. Most prominent of which is the issuing of three condemnations by three different parties, namely the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council], the "Damascus Declaration" states, and the Arab League.

It is worth noting here the strong and cohesive UAE stand on this issue, particularly by some of the emirates that have distinguished commercial ties to Tehran.

These sources expect the efforts at the next stage to focus on mobilizing greater regional, Arab, and international support for the UAE's rights in the three islands.

The sources added that by bringing the case into international focus the mediating groups—Gulf, Arab, and, recently, Qatari—might find the way to solving the problem, but the chances of this succeeding remain slim due to continued Iranian intransigence.

Gulf sources confirmed yesterday that Qatar's mediation between the UAE and Iran concerning the islands took place before the measures which Iran recently took on Abu Musa Island.

The sources said that Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, the emir of Qatar, proposed to UAE President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, when he visited Abu Dhabi last week to mediate this problem. He said he has charged his Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabbur Al Thani with carrying out this mission immediately after returning to Doha.

The sources did not disclose the progress made so far by the mediation, but said that it is still continuing. The mere fact that it is continuing is a good sign of hope in this regard.

Yemen

King Husayn To Attend Salih, al-Bid Meeting

JN2912091293 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 29 Dec 93 pp 1, 24

[By Hamdan al-Hajj in Amman; date not given]

[Text] Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister Mujahid Abu-Shawarib has announced that His Majesty King Husayn will personally attend and bless the reconciliation meeting between Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and his deputy 'Ali Salim al-Bid, which will be held soon to resolve the current dispute in Yemen.

In an exclusive interview with AL-DUSTUR, Abu-Shawarib said al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, Royal Hashmite Court chief, will leave for Yemen to work out plans and arrangements for the reception of His Majesty King Husayn and his attendance of that meeting.

He said the Yemeni president, his deputy, and the Yemeni people highly appreciate the role of his majesty the king and the Jordanian people, and value the great and fraternal attention given to what is going on in Yemen and the goodwill efforts of his majesty, which aim to heal the rift. They also value his majesty's emphasis that the Yemeni unity and integration should continue.

Abu-Shawarib voiced great optimism that the crisis in Yemen would soon be resolved, saying that everything is moving in the right direction and there is a determination by all to resort to dialogue. He added that the atmosphere is ripe for a meeting between the president and his deputy soon, and this meeting will emphasize unity and fraternity, and stress the Yemeni national interest, which is emphasized by all parties, especially the president and his deputy.

He said that there was no serious justification for the current dispute and that it was caused by flaws in certain organs and conditions. The Socialist Party has presented certain ideas and points, and a committee has been formed grouping the coalition parties and all other influential parties that are not coalition members. This committee is working hard to find the appropriate mechanism for resolving the points of disagreement that were presented and approved in principle by the president.

Abu-Shawarib said this committee has made great strides in that direction and adopted the first and most important decision, which is halting all media campaigns that triggered reactions, hurt feelings, and widened the gap between the president and his deputy because these campaigns conveyed untrue reports from one side to another.

On the objective of his visit to Syria yesterday, Abu-Shawarib said it was a personal visit to call on Former Yemeni President Justice 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Iryani, who is the father of all Yemenis and who lives in Damascus, and former Yemeni President 'Ali Nasir Muhammad.

YSP Blames 'Treacherous Hands' for Killing

NC2912073593 Paris AFP in English 0503 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Aden, Yemen, Dec 29 (AFP)—A young member of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) has been murdered in the capital city Sanaa, the party announced here Tuesday [28 December].

'Abd-al-Latif Sa'ad al-Ruwayni, "a young student and a dynamic party worker," was killed last Thursday, the 151st member of the YSP to be murdered since North and South united in May 1990, the party added.

The YSP blamed "treacherous hands" for the killing but did not elaborate.

Yemen for the past four months has been in political crisis, caused by conflict between President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, general secretary of the northern-based General People's Congress, and Vice-President 'Ali Salim al-Bid, leader of the YSP and a southerner.

Al-Bid has been entrenched in the southern city of Aden since August 19, demanding that political and economic decentralization be implemented as a condition for returning to Sanaa.

'Aziz Briefs National Assembly on UN Talks

JN2712175693 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1656 GMT 27 Dec 93

[Text] Baghdad, 27 Dec (INA)—The National Assembly today held a session within its current term to discuss the outcome of the of the talks the Iraqi negotiators held with the UN Security Council and the UN Special Commission in Baghdad and New York.

The National Assembly invited Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz to discuss this subject. He reviewed the nature of the relationships between Iraq and the UN Security Council and the Special Commission since the end of the 30-state aggression, the latest developments and current situation, and prospects for these relationships in the future.

Tariq 'Aziz explained the dimensions of the hostile attitude that has been adopted by certain international parties since 1990 up to the present and their use of the UN Security Council as a cover to reach their goal of placing Iraq under colonialist hegemony. He noted that the year 1993 has clearly confirmed that the assessment of Iraq's future were wrong, thanks to the steadfastness of Iraq's leadership and people. This fact, he said, has changed the conclusions drawn by these international parties, and the objective they sought to achieve in the prior phase can no longer be achieved.

Tariq 'Aziz discussed the topics he raised with some UN representatives on the Security Council during his visit and with [chairman of the UN Special Commission] Rolf Ekeus in New York and Baghdad. He stressed that Iraq sought to stress the need for a legal, not political, interpretation of UN Security Council Resolutions 715 and 687 in the interest of the two parties so that the UN Security Council would fulfill its obligations toward Iraq and lift the blockade.

AL-'IRAQ on New Conditions to Lift Embargo

JN2912113493 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 22 Dec 93 p 1

[Editorial: "What's This American Nervousness About?!!"]

[Text] We once said that a U.S. Administration frustrated by the collapse of the conspiracy against Iraq and its failure to realize its intended objectives, would be tempted to react nervously to increasing calls for an end to the iniquitous embargo. We also said that this U.S. Administration is seeking to black out the considerable amount of cooperation Iraq has shown toward the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 687. Paragraph 22 of that resolution calls for immediate action to terminate the embargo.

The latest UN Security Council vote on the issue showed the United States to be at odds with a generally positive trend, which recognized that it was time to look at the Security Council's obligations envisaged under Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. The argument advanced here is that Iraq has honored its obligations in full, and, therefore, the sanctions that have denied the Iraqis food, medicine, and other necessities are no longer justified.

Thus, we cannot but view the additional conditions set by the American UN delegate before action is taken to lift the sanctions in the context of open and sustained U.S. hostility toward the patient Iraqis. Not that we are surprised; the Clinton administration's approach to world problems has been typically confused and clumsy.

In this latest hostile stand, the U.S. Administration is swimming against the tide. The hard line the United States is urging against Iraq derives from a realization that the murderous sanctions are being increasingly perceived by the world as a violation of international law and human rights. The declared U.S. line of using the sanctions to make Iraq abandon its principled quest for a decent life free of domination and blackmail, is, therefore, destined for more failures.

By calling into question Iraq's positive approach to the UN Special Commission and the Security Council and suggesting the need for additional guarantees, America's UN delegate is guilty of deception and lying. Mr. Ekeus' report to the Council was clear enough, as was the Council's satisfaction with the cooperation shown by the Iraqi side at recent New York talks. Such circuitous tactics are inconsistent with the noble tasks the Security Council is supposed to fulfill.

Having acquitted themselves against military aggression, and having risen to the challenge and defeated the iniquitous embargo, the Iraqis now realize more than ever that their best bet is their unique leadership and their unsurpassed capacity to handle developments and their resolve to tap their own reserves and pursue the option of dignity and national pride. The sanctions are bound to come to an end and are already eroding, and their sponsors are beginning to recognize facts on the ground. We are almost on the homestretch. If only the Americans and others would understand that, when the going gets rough, rather than wither, the spirit of the Mother of Battles soars. It is an exercise in self-delusion to think otherwise.

Ministry Denies Report of Imprisoned Iranians

JN2812170593 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1440 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Excerpts] Baghdad, 28 Dec (INA)—The Foreign Ministry has described the report disseminated by the Iranian news agency, IRNA, that Iraq is still holding in camps a number of Iranian civilians, who were captured at the beginning of the Iraq-Iran war, as fabricated and baseless. [passage omitted] The following is the text of the Foreign Ministry's denial:

On 21 December 1993, the French news agency, AFP, cited IRNA as saying that Iraq is still holding in camps a

number of civilians who were captured at the beginning of the Iraq-Iran war and thus 26 Iranians escaped from [as received] Dezful. According to IRNA, those Iranians affirmed that a number of Iranian families are still being held in Iraq.

The Foreign Ministry is surprised at the dissemination of such fabricated and baseless reports. They are a part of the Iranian attempt to distort facts in order to justify the inhumane positions taken by the Iranian Government in its refusal to return thousands of Iraqi prisoners of war. Meanwhile, the Iranian Government refuses to receive Iranian refugees in Iraq. It evades its legal responsibilities in this regard following Iraq's repeated requests to Iran to return those Iranian refugees from Iraq in accordance with the relevant international agreements.

In order to clarify the fact and reveal the lies of Iranian media, the Foreign Ministry would like to explain the following:

Thousands of Iranian refugees of various ethnic groups moved to Iraq. They were received in accordance with its compliance with its international and humanitarian commitments. Iraq prepared all the necessary requirements to provide them with their needs, such as housing, food, medical care, and schools.

Since the arrival of the Iranian refugees in Iraq, the Iraqi Government has been implementing the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, with regard to the protection of civilians during wartime. The Iraqi Government has conducted strong coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN High Commission for Refugees in order to ensure both sides' supervision of the refugee camps and to follow up special resettlement programs in accordance with the related international agreements.

Following the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran, the Iraqi Government proposed to the Iranian side to allow all the Iranian refugees to return to Iran. However, the Iranian authorities did not respond fully, and later, they agreed to send a 20-member delegation to Iraq, led by ambassador Shehabi, in order to meet the refugees, identify them, and verify their documents. But, the process of returning the refugees stopped suddenly due to the Iranian side's refusal to receive its citizens without giving any reason for this halt.

The ministry reiterates that the Iranian refugees in question, and to which IRNA referred, are Iranian citizens from Ahvaz who were given the choice of returning to Iran along with thousands of Iranian refugees Iraq allowed to leave Iraq, pursuant to its international commitments.

The Iraqi Government adopts a principled stand toward this issue. It is ready to return all Iranian refugees who are still residing in Iraq. It calls on the Iranian Government to announce its approval of receiving the Iranian refugees in Iraq who desire to return to Iran.

Iran, Turkey Said Collaborating Against Nation

JN2812210093 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 22 Dec 93 p 1

["Baghdad Pact Returns" by Mazhar 'Arif]

[Text] It seems hostility toward Iraq and the Iraqis continues to be the official policy in Turkey and Iran, despite the change in the top leadership in both countries in the past few years, and regardless of certain differences in details in either country.

Repeated attacks against Iraqi territory and Iraqi Kurdish citizens by Turkish and Iranian regular forces, on the pretext of striking at the Turkish Kurdish Workers Party or the Iranian Kurdish Democratic Party, show more than Turkey's and Iran's disdain of Iraq. They also show that the rulers of Ankara and Tehran insist on inflicting more harm on our people by taking advantage of the current circumstances this struggling country is facing. The Turks and Iranians are playing with fire. They should not wager on these circumstances lasting forever. Nor should they depend on a handful of renegades among Iraqi Kurds who betrayed their country and Kurdish nationality and turned into instruments at the hands of foreign forces and the tyrants of backwardness and chauvinism in the region.

Events have shown that the latest security agreement between Turkey and Iran has one main objective among its undeclared objectives: Continued interference against Iraq and the Iraqis in the northern and southern parts of the homeland under various pretexts and excuses.

As always, this agreement enjoys the support and backing of the United States and other Western states. Criminal operations against Iraq's policy and Iraqi citizens are also encouraged and supported by old and new imperialists in, and outside the region.

Our people see in the irresponsible attitude of the rulers of Turkey and Iran a return to the ideas of the vanished Baghdad pact, which are directed against the country and its people, who destroyed that pact 35 years ago, despite all the changes in the world since then.

King Fahd Warned Against Anti-Iraq Policy

JN2812213993 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 23 Dec 93 p 1

[Editorial by Nuri Najm al-Marsumi: "Fahd and Continuing the Path of Evil"]

[Text] Fahd, the king of the Saudi family, spoke at the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting held in Riyadh the day before yesterday. As usual, he assailed Iraq, thanks to the current amity between the [Kuwaiti] al-Sabah family and Saudi Arabia. Fahd said Iraq still evades the implementation of Security Council resolutions and continues its threats and false allegations on the governorate of Kuwait, and so on.

In his remarks, Fahd seemed as if he is the faithful defender and the honest guard of the region. We do not

want to remind Fahd of the days and events that took place during the second half of 1990 and during the U.S.-Zionist-Atlantic aggression on Iraq, nor do we want to remind him of the panic and fears that afflicted him along with the rest of the family members and the hosted criminals of the al-Sabah family who fled the governorate of Kuwait. Let us leave this to history.

However, we will tell Fahd and other rulers who continue the policy of hostility and of instigating aggression against Iraq: This policy is dangerous. We also tell them: In the past, this policy prompted you to mortgage the countries on which you were imposed as rulers to covetous foreign forces. This policy will force you into mortgaging or selling what is still left in your hands. It will not provide you with security and protection because the nation vehemently rejects colonialism and the policies of humiliating subservience to the foreigner. As a result of these policies, the nation's resources were lost in vain.

The policy of hostility toward the Iraqi people, who are facing the ugliest embargo known to nations, as well as circulating the lies made by the criminal al-Sabah family—lies which are known to the world—reflect persistence in pursuing crime and in proceeding on the path of evil. These policies will not achieve security, stability, and peace for the region or for its rulers. On the contrary, these policies aggravate conflicts and initiate wars. If Fahd really wants peace and stability, he should first stop fostering more crimes, return others to the path of good, and end his disgraceful alliances with the foreigner. U.S. troops and other foreign forces should leave the Arab peninsula and Gulf. Only then will the region and its peoples live in security and peace. Otherwise, the fate of Fahd and others will not be better that the fate of those who preceded them on the path of treason and treachery.

Kurdish 'Prime Minister' Rasul Cited on Fighting

NC2912130893 Paris AFP in English 1230 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Report by Lissy Schmidt]

[Text] Irbil, Iraq, Dec 29 (AFP)—Week-long clashes between rival Kurdish groups in northern Iraq killed more than 70 people before the main pro-Iranian Islamic group was disarmed, officials and hospitals said Wednesday [29 December].

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) flushed the pro-Iranian [Kurdistan Islamic League] KIL out of its military bases on Monday. Nearby 200 members of KIL were arrested, but most were freed again after their weapons were confiscated.

"We are sad about this fighting," said Kusret Rasul of the PUK, who serves as prime minister in an Iraqi Kurdish administration set up last year in defiance of Baghdad.

"We would have preferred to resolve the problems in another way, but KIL gave us no choice. We had to react," Rasul told AFP in Irbil, where the administration is based.

Rasul said he himself escaped an assassination bid in the town on Monday, which killed four of his guards.

At least 72 fighters were killed and 250 wounded in clashes since last week, mostly in Irbil and al-Sulaymaniyah, which lies close to the Iranian border, officials and hospitals workers said.

The two groups also clashed two months ago, at the cost of 50 lives.

The Kurdish authorities, grouping the PUK with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), have accused Iran of destabilizing northern Iraq by arming the KIL and other opposition groups.

KDP leader Mas'ud Barzani on Tuesday blamed LIK for instigating the clashes despite a ceasefire accord. But he also criticized the PUK for launching attacks in al-Sulaymaniyah and Irbil to disarm its rivals by force.

In Baghdad, official newspapers also accused neighbouring countries of stirring up trouble in northern Iraq.

"The absence of a central administration, foreign intervention and the treason of (Kurdish) agents in the pay of foreigners are behind these clashes," said AL-QADISIYAH.

AL-JUMHURIYAH said the lack of Western intervention raised doubts over the declared allied goal of protecting the Iraqi Kurds.

The allies who defeated Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war for Kuwait have since declared a "no-fly zone" over the north and patrol its skies to prevent Iraqi army attacks to regain control of the region.

The Turkish parliament on Tuesday renewed the mandate of the multinational force deployed at the southern air base of Incirlik near Adana to protect Iraqi Kurds under Operation Provide Comfort.

The government requested the six-month extention in response to the "instability and insecurity" in northern Iraq, according to a government spokesman in Ankara.

Foreign Media Silence on Kurdish 'Carnage' Decried

JN2812100893 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0720 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 28 Dec (INA)—AL-'IRAQ newspaper today wonders why the U.S., British, and French media are silent about the massacres taking place in the autonomous region of Kurdistan under the very gaze of these countries.

In an article today, the paper says these media, which "champion" the Kurdish people, have lent a deaf ear to

the killing, destruction, and carnage, noting that hundreds of our Kurdish people are being killed daily.

The paper points out that the foreign powers which control the region by force could have instructed their agents in the region to stop this devastating war. They could have also easily intervened, through Iran or Turkey, to silence guns and bullets and end the killing, by means of the forces which they claim are present to protect the Kurds.

The paper adds: Foreign forces in Kurdistan are standing by watching the acts of a play they have written unfold. In this play, they have carefully assigned roles to their agents, and started fanning the flames of the war to burn the Kurds and then reap the fruits for themselves and not for the Kurds.

AL-'IRAQ goes on: This is the democracy they are talking about; this is the dialogue which the agents claim to be pursuing; and these are the results of forming a phony government that walks on shaky ground. It is the truth that is known to us and to our Kurdish people, who are awaiting the day when the foreigner and its agents leave the border. Then, love and amity will be restored between the sons of Iraq—Arabs, Kurds, and minorities—and the suffering of the past will end, heralding the achievement of their hopes and progress and stability in the homeland under leader Saddam Husayn. [passage omitted]

Saddam Orders 4 Million Dinars for Writers Hall

JN2812184593 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, has ordered the allocation of 4 million dinars to build a hall for the activities of the General Federation of Writers and Intellectuals in the al-Basrah Governorate. An INA correspondent in the governorate learned that the companies of the Housing and Construction Ministry began to carry out the leader president's order by studying the plan prepared by the al-Basrah University engineering consultant in order to expedite the implementation of the order.

Al-Basrah intellectuals expressed their pride in and gratitude for the leader president's noble deed. They also highly praised His Excellency's gesture and his continuous support for the intellectual and artist activities in the state.

Court Meets on VOA Correspondent's Case

JN2812172393 Baghdad INA in English 1400 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Baghdad, Dec 28, INA—Former U.S. President George Bush has personally ordered the Voice of America (VOA) to fire its correspondent in Baghdad during the days of the war against Iraq in 1991, a court here was told on Monday [27 December].

The al-Karradah Court was in session to listen to witnesses in the case filed by former Voice of America correspondent 'Umar Jum'ah. Mr Jum'ah, Palestinian, was dismissed because he sent objective reports from Baghdad on the extent of damage caused to civilians as a result of indiscriminate allied bombing during the war. The VOA was also angered by a report from Kuwait City in which the former correspondent exposed the fabricated U.S.-Kuwaiti story of incubators.

One of the witnesses, former REUTERS correspondent Subhi Haddad, said he and Jum'ah were among a group of correspondents who had been to the hospital in Kuwait where Iraqi soldiers were allegedly said to have moved the incubators, leaving babies to die on the hospital floor. Bush repeatedly referred to this incidence as part of his hectic drive to drum up support for his war against Iraq.

The witness told the court that Saudi King Fahd was infuriated by Jum'ah's report on the incubators lie, so he telephoned Bush who in turn told the VOA to fire its correspondent in Baghdad.

Haddad said this had been confirmed by Voice of America correspondent in Amman Mohammad Ghuneim as well as by Douglas Roberts, a senior VOA correspondent in the Middle East at the time.

The other witness in the case told the court that he also had been to the hospital and saw the incubators were still there.

Faruq Shukri of the AGENCE FRANCE PRESS said he met there with a Kuwaiti doctor who told the correspondent none of the incubators was missing.

Both witnesses said there were Kuwaiti and Egyptian doctors as well as nurses from the Philippines.

The court adjourned until January 20 next year and the judge Sa'di Sadiq Ahmad said the issue will be referred to three experts to assess the moral damage suffered by the former VOA correspondent. Two of the experts are from the Iraqi Bar Association while the third is Rasmi al-'Amil, lawyer and journalist.

Mr Jum'ah's lawyer Husayn Sa'id 'Isa said Jum'ah was fired for political reasons, namely because his reports had jeopardized the American policy of covering up the scale of civilian suffering during the war.

He told THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER that the correspondent had been subject to pressure by his employers to keep the lid tight on the damage inflicted on non-military targets.

The lawyer said the VOA decision has harmed his client's prestige and journalistic standing.

Jum'ah had worked as Voice of America correspondent in Baghdad from 1985 to mid-February 1991. He covered events during the Iraq-Iran war as well as a substantial part of the Gulf hostilities until he was fired.

'Political Meaning' Seen in Syrian Jews' Exit

TA2812193293 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen video report]

[Text] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's decision to grant exit permits to Jews has a political meaning. At least as far as Jerusalem is concerned, it is believed that this decision is part of a comprehensive move which will culminate in al-Asad's declaration about his willingness to have full peace with Israel. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports:

[Begin recording] [Rosen] The countdown can start. On 16 January, President Hafiz al-Asad will depart Damascus—which is itself an event—and fly to Geneva to confer with U.S. President Bill Clinton. According to all assessments and information, in Geneva al-Asad will say yes to full peace with Israel in exchange for a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The U.S. plan about an Israeli-Syrian declaration of principles in April 1994 is acceptable to both Damascus and Jerusalem.

Senior sources say Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has the full backing of the main military establishment—led by Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq and Chief of Intelligence Uri Sagi—for a daring move on the Golan.

In the meantime, this is the time for gestures. When he wants to be nice, al-Asad sells Israel the precious goods—Syria's Jews—via the United States, and Jerusalem gets the message.

[Rabin] In the wake of contacts between the United States and Syria, the Syrian Government will annul the freeze on granting exit permits to Jewish families to leave Syria en route to Europe or the United States. We have to wait and see what happens, whether this will really come true. My impression is that it will. [end recording]

Intelligence Chief Says PLO 'Has No Alternative'

TA2912080393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] The head of military intelligence, General Uri Sagi, says he has no doubt that agreement with the PLO will be signed because Yasir 'Arafat has no alternative.

Sagi told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that 'Arafat takes a very realistic political approach. The general added that the PLO leader may not be informed of every detail in the negotiations, and that he may have differences over flexibility with his chief negotiators Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], Nabil Sha'th, and Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh. Sagi told the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the three may be ready to take a more flexible stand than 'Arafat.

The intelligence commander was also of the view that the majority of Palestinians support the PLO and 'Arafat whom they view as their sole leader.

'Terrorist' Stabs Citizen Near Hebron

TA2912082793 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] An Israeli citizen has been stabbed in the vicinity of Adoram, south of Hebron. Initial reports indicate that he is in serious condition. An intensive care unit has arrived at the scene to administer medical treatment to the victim.

Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that a sanitary engineer and another worker employed by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] drove to the garbage dump near the Hebron area village of Kharas. A terrorist rushed at them, stabbed the victim, and immediately fled.

'Terrorist' Captured

TA2912105693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] A short while ago, the security forces apprehended the terrorist who stabbed a sanitary engineer near Adoram, south of Hebron, this morning. The victim sustained moderate to serious injuries.

Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that the victim managed to shoot the assailant, who fled and was subsequently captured after receiving medical treatment at a Hebron hospital. He admitted to the stabbing and the knife used in the attack was found. Under interrogation, it was discovered that the assailant had been released from the al-Zahiriyah prison approximately 10 days ago.

This morning, a firebomb was hurled at an Israeli car in Halhul. The vehicle was damaged but no one was hurt.

Prince Hasan Views Various Issues in AL-SAFIR Interview

JN2712113593 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 26 Dec 93 pp 1, 21

[Report on interview with Crown Prince Hasan conducted by Talal Salman, chief editor of the Lebanese newspaper AL-SAFIR in Amman; date not given]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Prince Hasan did not wait for the question, but proceeded as if he was continuing a friendly dialogue that had started a long time ago. He spoke about the need for continuity among the Arabs without preconditions as well as for providing Arab thinkers and pressmen with correct information. It was natural for him to speak about his favorite platform—The Arab Thought Forum—and the attempts to find a framework to gather Arab thinkers and a healthy framework to discuss the situation in the nation. He discovered that even this was banned and that Arab countries have forced their thinkers to boycott the forum.

The interview also dealt with other Arab concerns such as the black gold's move to lead the intellectual, cultural, and media orientation.

The first station dealt with the Vatican and its policy which leans toward recognizing Israel and exchanging diplomatic representation with it. Although the prince was kind in his opposition to the Vatican, he stressed that it is impossible for the people of Bilad al-Sham to accept that their churches and points of reference be linked with the representative of the Vatican in Tel Aviv, for example.

We then moved to the main issue of concern. Prince Hasan Bin-Talal said: There is a mistaken concept that putting pressure on Jordan will give Yasir 'Arafat an opportunity to proceed with a course which does not seem to enjoy the satisfaction of the majority of the Palestinians. The rejection or opposition, however, is not because Jordan instigates others to do so, but because the agreement itself does not constitute a solution.

The pictorial meetings have accomplished their objectives. The whole issue must be discussed. If the solution is not comprehensive it will not be a solution. Many basic questions must be answered first. How can Iran be excluded from the Middle East region which they are talking about? Until when will Iraq remain ignored regardless of the view about its regime? Why is pressure being put on Jordan through the continuation of the blockade on al-'Aqabah Port? This is undeniable political pressure, as I explained and showed evidence to the U.S. congressmen who visited us.

Relations with Syria are distinguished and we have continuous meetings and contacts with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. The myth of the Jordanian and Syrian options has ended. We insist on strengthening relations between Arab Asia and Arab Africa. Hence, maintaining ties with Egypt is inevitable. However, improvisation must be avoided, because this will serve others.

The prince smiled bitterly while reviewing the chapters of the complicated relationship between Jordan and the PLO leadership. He reiterated the Jordanian constants, denying any charges of trying to impose hegemony over or intervene in the so-called national decisionmaking. He said: Jordan has always been first to crystallize the Palestinian identity and reiterate national Palestinian rights.

Prince Hasan added: We have always tried to establish healthier and more secure Jordanian-Palestinian relations. Hence came the United Arab Kingdom plan proposed by His Majesty King Husayn in 1972. However, all parties expeditiously rejected that plan. And Israel was among these parties because it wanted to remove any Jordanian trace or touch in the West Bank.

Jordan then proposed an internationally-financed development plan for the West Bank in 1986. This plan was also rejected without discussion or excuse.

The trembling voice disappeared for a moment and a short pained laugh was heard. He said: The main issue is Arab human rights from the view of a comprehensive peace. Let me say that these cumulative rights include refugees' right to repatriation, religious and political rights to Jerusalem, and the right to life and to a comprehensive peace. This will save the region from extremism which results from economies of despair.

There was a moment of silence, and the shadow of history seemed to prevail inside the offices of the Royal Palace, set up by the late 'Abdallah Bin-al-Husayn, the founder of the Kingdom. The offices can be characterized as neat rather than luxurious. They enjoy the shade of various trees picked by the man who came from Hijaz [King 'Abdallah] from the four corners of the globe. Inspired by this historical heritage, we asked:

It is as if fate has placed the Hashemites on a collision course with the Zionists. The fight has been going on since the end of World War I. As a Hashemite prince ridden by a long history of conflict with the Zionists, how did you feel when you shook hands with Shim'on Peres, foreign minister of the Zionist entity, at the White House under the auspices of U.S. President Bill Clinton?

A black cloud overshadowed the room. Prince Hasan looked away, as Ahmad Salamah, a witty journalist summoned by the prince to the Royal Court, was rapt in recollecting sadness, or what was left of it, after that historic moment. We then heard Prince Hasan say in a bitter tone: How does a freedom fighter feel when he goes on a deadly, yet unavoidable, mission?

I was this commando. I volunteered for this commando operation. He stopped for a while, then continued: Full understanding of the historical context is different from a selective approach when taking stands. Most of the stands we know of are based on a selective approach.

As a Hashemite, I feel and think that no Hashemite has ever relinquished any of the nation's rights. If we recall the first meeting between King Faysal I and Hayim Weizman, that meeting took place unwillingly. You are asking me how I felt at that moment. It was as if I was under a summons. Naturally, it was a gloomy moment. We felt bitter and sad. Some of the people who were with me even wept.

In brief, when I met Peres it was a bitter moment and I felt sorry for the Arab nation. But what does man's life and personal dignity mean away from the nation's life and general state of affairs?

I remembered that harsh moment on 5 June 1967. I was a student in Britain when I received a call breaking the news to me of what happened. I burst into tears and felt mortally helpless. It was one of the worst days of my life, especially since I was living in the West. Anyone who lives in the West knows what is being hatched against this nation and knows about the methods and power of Zionism.

The current situation of the nation makes one feel sad and distracted. Perhaps we are the saddest generation of this century. The Gulf crisis has torn us apart. We were not in excellent shape before the Gulf crisis, but we have fallen to the bottom of the abyss now.

When faced with this deteriorating, miserable situation of the nation, the individual is no longer important. He does not care much about his own wounds and personal dignity vis-a-vis the interests of the nation and the attempts to defend it. The individual must have the feelings of a commando. He should presume that he is assigned a mission and that he should carry it out at whatever cost.

I felt even more bitter over the arrogant and haughty air with which he [Peres] received me. He was relishing in victory. However, I did not look at him. Nor did I address him. I was a guest of the American president, and I had no right to object to the president hosting other guests.

As a matter of fact, I went to Washington to demand Jordan's rights at the donor conference for the peace process. I had no plans at all to meet Peres.

We were turned away. I was asked to act as if peace has indeed been established and to confine discussion to aspects of cooperation to set up a new Middle East. When I insisted on explaining my country's view of the forthcoming peace, they said they would allow me two minutes to speak. Of course, I refused. An official Jordanian delegation was there, but I wanted to address the root cause of the problem.

Then, a meeting was proposed at the White House. It was difficult for me to refuse, since I was not the host nor the person who addressed the invitation.

However, throughout the meeting, I addressed the U.S. host. When we emerged to meet reporters, everybody heard Peres asking me to shake hands with him. Then they heard President Clinton asking me to do the same thing. They also heard me say that we have not yet agreed on anything that deserves a handshake.

Perhaps they wanted to take a picture. They care a lot about pictures. But then what? What is before and behind the picture? And what is the difference between the picture of 'Arafat and Rabin (along with Peres) and the picture of Hasan and Peres at the White House? Regrettably, the picture is isolated from its background. I am not comparing the role of anybody to that of anybody else. I went to the United States with a message from His Majesty King Husayn to the U.S. president and to the donor conference. The message asserted the right of refugees to return and the rights of the Arab individual to his land and holy shrines.

We also did not want the support of the donor countries to turn into support for Israel and a reward for it for everything it has done in the occupied territories and the areas around.

A quiet discussion then took place. The tense moment passed, taking with it its bitter memories.

The U.S.-Israeli relationship, according to Prince Hasan, is one of strategic alliance, as both parties publicly say. Hasan does not imagine that a real Israeli-Palestinian alliance would be established. Likewise, he does not imagine that the repercussions of the Gaza-Jericho agreement would extend to the peoples in the Gulf so they would rashly conclude an alliance with Israel, because doing so would conflict with both the law of life and logic of reality.

It is out of the question that Israel would recognize the Arab man and deal with him as an equal. Has Israel recognized the full rights of the "1948 Arabs," even as "citizens"?

The talk about the "religious jurisdiction" over Jerusalem is not meant to circumvent the "political jurisdiction" over it. The religious jurisdiction is an Islamic right which we have constantly demanded, and are demanding now. We call on all Islamic sects to participate in such a jurisdiction and to deal with the Islamic trusts in the holy city according to an organized plan and in coordination with the Christian brothers.

When the al-Aqsa Mosque was set ablaze in 1969, we adopted the Islamic conference formula. However, we now feel an urgent need to develop the Islamic concepts. An example of the ideas raised is the international fund for alms. Such a fund would be more comprehensive than the domestic alms formula.

The world talks about Islamic fundamentalism. However, the world ignores the fact that 80 percent of the refugees in the world are Muslims.

Jerusalem means the city and its people. It is not only a place, and we are not seeking to replace one flag with another.

We aspire for transferring sovereignty from the occupation to an Arab authority. We do not want to dominate anyone, so it is inconceivable for us to see a sovereignty vacuum over Jerusalem.

The talk about 'Arafat is painful. Among the events which Prince Hasan did not talk about is the fact that during 'Arafat's recent visit to Amman to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, 'Arafat insisted that the meeting should take place at the U.S. ambassador's residence and not at the Guest Palace, as if 'Arafat wanted to hold the meeting on "U.S. territory." After the meeting, 'Arafat immediately left for the airport although it had been agreed that 'Arafat would meet again with King Husayn in order to assess the situation and coordinate with him on confronting the Israeli intransigence.

As far as Jordan is concerned, there are people who accuse 'Arafat of deliberately halting some aspects of the [Jordanian-Palestinian] dialogue, particularly the economic talks, on the pretext of seeking to exhaust all political efforts to achieve economic independence, after which 'Arafat may coordinate with Jordan. Hence the Jordanian insistence on reopening the Jordanian bank branches in the West Bank "so that everyone would not have to report to the Israeli banks."

We try not to create any problem between us because we appreciate that the kinsfolk in the occupied territories need an Arab lifeline. This is a pan-Arab duty. We are thus trying to provide whatever is needed, beginning with the training of the [Palestinian] policemen and including the provision of anything else that can benefit our kinsfolk.

We regard the occupied territories as an Arab land. Thus, we have not hoisted any Jordanian flag on the bridges because we do not regard them as borders.

[Salman] Do you feel there is a threat to the entity and to the throne after all that has taken place, particularly since the throne stands over delicate balances and is closely linked with the Arab-Israeli conflict?

Prince Hasan said: Jordan is strong, and its strength lies in its people, accomplishments, and democracy. Jordan has grown up thanks to its leadership's experiment. We are also the heirs of an awakening revolution that respects human rights and promotes human standards.

We are a civilized society which gives everybody, who wants to live in it, his full rights, regardless of his origin, roots, beliefs, or even religion.

We are trying to give an identity or a name to the Arab region. We always say to the West: Why does this region not have a name like other regions? We also address this question to ourselves because nobody listens to a silent person.

[Salman] Do you expect the sanctions on Iraq to be lifted soon since there are some indications of this?

[Hasan] It is difficult to achieve a comprehensive and just peace without Iraq and Iran. In order to contain extremism, terrorism, and all other crises which the West is talking about, people in this region must enjoy peace.

[Salman] Where are the boundaries between Islam and Islamic extremism? Sometimes it seems as if there are no boundaries in the eyes of the West? In light of your meeting with Peres and of what you have heard from him and in view of your own assessment, how does Israel view the Arab homeland and how does it view itself? What about the future?

[Hasan] Israel wants to become a member of the Middle East. However, it might demand something more than membership, that is, hegemony. What encourages it in this regard is the absence of Arab coordination. Israel might imagine that it can set up an alliance that begins in Azerbaijan, passes through the Arab oil countries, and ends in America.

[Salman] Can it achieve this?

[Hasan] Everything depends on the Arabs. The future picture needs an earnest Arab action; and the future picture needs a knowledge of the content and a definition of what the Arabs want and can do.

Prince Hasan on PLO Relations, Peace Process

JN2712122293 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 27 Dec 93 pp 1, 5

["Major Excerpts" of Crown Prince Hasan's interview with United Arab Emirates Television, and JORDAN TIMES and AL-RA'Y newspapers; place and date not given]

[Excerpt] "Concerning the quest for a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its root cause, the Palestinian problem, Jordan was always in the lead in announcing its principled stands and affirming them through all the stages of the 25 months of negotiations since the Madrid conference launched the talks and the past few weeks since August and after the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles.

"It was clear that the Joranian agenda, which was not an agreement inasmuch as an arrangement of topics listed on the discussions, was a practical expression when the government approved it. This expresses the sincere will to support the Palestinian stand in a practical way. Support for the Palestinian and the Arab identity there in the occupied territories and for the Palestinian national decision is the most Jordan can offer in these difficult circumstnaces. But when we talk about a regional vision and the role of countries in practising their sovereignty we cannot talk about solutions and agreements of use and content unless they tackle priorities first, such as the issues of sovereignty, borders, refugees and water. Here rises the call for discussing these issues in working groups within the framework of the multilateral talks.

"We hope that the bilateral negotiations would resume in the first or second month of next year with some clarity on the part of the negotiating parties. There is no meaning for renewing the endeavours if the goal of the negotiations is not targetted by these parties, and the goal for Jordan is very clear—and that is solving problems in a comprehensive manner.

"When we talk about Jordan's sovereign rights we talk about the problem of refugees and their right to be repatriated or to return. But the Israeli side affirms that the repatriation issue is not an Israeli affair...

"When we talk about refugees we talk about the displaced and the exiles and the human waves which entered Jordan in 1948, 1967 and recently in 1991.

"We then talk about a comprehensive vision of human resources in the region, it is difficult to solve these issues bilaterally or trilaterally and there should be a regional look to be able to talk about water and water consumers, and the world should be reminded of the human context, and that is what I told President Clinton when we met, that we do not believe in the projects that make the rich richer and the poor poorer. We believe in the content that glorifies and honours the human content. Without honouring human beings there will be no peace and no stability in the Middle East.

"Concerning national rights, when we talk about borders, we in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan view that stepped up efforts should be exerted to solve border issues in the north and the south.

"I think the form of Arab meetings with the American leadership recently was serving the prevailing impression in the region that these declared and televised meetings serve only the image of absent coordination. In the future when we look at the picture of the Washington or Geneva meetings we will ask, as inhabitants of this region and as people suffering from occupation and shouldering the burdens of all sentimental slogans calling for a solution, questions about the tangible dimensions, the moral dimension, the cultural dimension and the religious dimension. I do not think that a Jordan-American summit or a Syrian-American summit will take the Arab citizen away from such questions. On the contrary, it will add a new question, 'will all these meetings serve the cause of peace?'

"When we look at Jordanian-Syrian coordination and when we look at the Arab countries neighbouring Israel and the continued meetings and when we look at the American will to talk with the parties I think we see the U.S. realises that a comprehensive coordination among the Arab parties is an essential element to avoid the idea of having a Jordanian choice, a Syrian choice or a Palestinian choice. The only choice is a comprehensive peace and I believe that these meetings fall within this context."

"Jordan is a host of three waves of refugees—displaced persons, expellees and stateless people. We might say that 31 per cent of the total number of the Palestinian people live in Jordan, compared to 43 per cent living in historical Palestine. When we talk about immigration and the Middle East region we talk about the respnsibilities of all of the region's states, whether they are bordering Israel or not. We talk about Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and Yemen. We talk about countries that have a main role in hosting large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. The solution is on the Palestinian soil. There is the solution and it lies in practising the right of repatriation or return. I think the important thing here is to remember that the steps towards a comprehensive solution always remind us that the story of Jordan and Palestine today is not the issue. The issue today is how to discuss the issue of the right to return or be repatriated and solving the problem of Palestinians wherever they are in an acceptable way that gives it its civil, economic and social rights in a fair manner in the Middle East region."

The Crown Prince was asked: After the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement in September in Washington there was some confusion on the Jordanian arena and there was some talk about 'who is Jordanian' and the return of citizens of Palestinian origin to their country. This was reflected in a clear manner on the economic situation. The question is 'are there any definite Jordanian procedures that you will take in this regard? [no end quotation mark as published]

The Crown Prince replied: "I think this question is loaded and when I say loaded this means there are two elements in your question. The first part asks about the Jordanian and Palestinian identity. This question in Jordan might be made by the imagination of those who think that there is a rift, God forbid, in the fabrics of this society.

"We believe in the national unity in words and deeds. We also at the same time believe in pluralism and respect for other views and devoting belonging through clearly defining 'identity' at the Islamic, regional level and naturally through discussing how is Jordanian? I wonder at those asking about the third and fourth grandfather's birthplace and how we talk about a great Arab revolt in Jordan and talk about renaissance movements.

"It is really unreasonable that the Kingdom's founder 'Abdallah, may God's mercy be upon him, who received the refugees in 1948 that his grandsons, God forbid, to... His Majesty always stresses national unity between citizens regardless of their origins; it is irrational that we contradict ourselves and the historical message, while our history says that we enhance this identity in words and deeds combined..."

On a question on a future Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, the Crown Prince said:

"Confederation with whom? When Jordan's proposal on the form of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship in

1972 was presented it was not accepted by our Arab brethren and they refused to look at the details of this proposal.

"The Israeli side also may be in 1972 was thinking that Jordanian touches were still tangible in the occupied territories and maybe was comfortable with ruling out the idea of confederation in 1972 and in 1974 that was a stand supporting an independent Palestinian identity and backing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. An in 1988 there was Jordan's decision to sever its legal and administrative ties with the West Bank.

"I would like to ask about the issue of shifting from the practical role in supporting the Palestinian identity in trade and education from Jordanian to Palestinian sovereignty, by God's will... and I wonder about the way to complete these stages and about confederation... But it is impossible to talk about structural relationship unless we develop the practical relationship from the base to the top."

Asked whether there was a coolness in Jordanian-Palestinian relations, with reference that the recent visit paid by Yasir 'Arafat did not produce positive results at the level of developing the work of the joint committees or signing the economic cooperation agreement, the Crown Prince said:

"We cannot judge this relationship by using such vocabulary and it is enough to say that the Palestinian side is naturally burdened by heavy international responsibilities, keeping in touch with various governments in this world to outline the signs of progress and responsibilities in formulating a concept of Palestinian administration with its various aspects.

"So we wait and expect a positive answer on transferring the committees that were formed between the Jordanians and the Palestinians to a new monument of agreeing on several issues regarding the commercial relationship.

"I like to emphasise that opening the branches of Jordanian banks have nothing to do with the talks of the past few months. There was a Palestinian request in 1986 to open branches of Jordanian banks in the occupied territories and that is under study now. But my main question is that if we continued in reality not to coordinate stands in the quantity and quality as required by the Jordanian and the Arab vision neighbouring occupied Palestine... and who will win the round...?"

On possible regional economic cooperation, including Israel, he said:

"I believe that the political framework is the main issue in everything as I have expressed on many occasions before. We do not believe in projects that make the rich richer and the poor poorer. We believe in the political, legal framework that respects the countries' national sovereignty and that these countries practise their sovereignty in all fields. But when we talk about the region's clear market, allow me to remind you to the Arab boycott of Israel as an example because there should be a substitute. We really do not want to have voices rising in this world calling for ending the boycott within the framework of removing the unfriendly phrases about Israel in the United Nations' resolutions. It is inevitable to remind you that Greece, Spain and Portugal were countries that joined the European agreement on tariffs and have been receiving huge financial incentives. So it was not difficult for them to join that agreement.

"I talk about Israel's entering the region's market in stages over years through a full understanding of the great existing gaps and the need to contain and address them in a clear way that would not leave the Arab citizen with the impression that the economy of the $50 or $60 billion is invading and dominating. We naturally do not seek an economic solution to economic problems but seek a political and legal framework and we look for the means to develop this region as the other regions of the world."

On the West's perception of Islam, the Crown Prince said:

"As a Hashemite, I cannot but belong to Islam as a dogma and a faith. When we talks about Islamic radicalism I believe we are wrong when we accept such vocabulary. In defending the image of Muslims in the world I think I am extremist. I address the world as I did in the United Nations, in my defence of the image of Islam as we know and as we live in the Islamic Nation. But allow me to mention the reason of extremism and focus on the policies of despair. In particular, I remember when we were demanding the establishment of an international alms fund...."

On possibilities of better Arab relations and the UAE's call for Arab reconciliation, the Crown Prince said:

"Naturally we received this call with full appreciation and admiration, and we admire statements by Shaykh Zayid and some UAE officials who made us feel the certain desire to mend fences. I can talk about my interest in the Arab Thought Forum and the call to having understanding between us before having to reach agreement..." [passage omitted]

Prince Hasan Hosts Banquet for New Deputies

JN2312203393 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 23 Dec 93

[Report by Hani al-Badri from the Royal Hashemite Court in Amman]

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn took part in a breakfast banquet hosted by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan in the honor of new members of the House of Representatives at Basman Palace this morning. His Majesty King Husayn wished the new deputies success in their parliamentary work to serve their nation and constituencies.

The deputies praised this initiative, which is in line with King Husayn's usual practice that embodies communication between the leadership and the people and their representatives.

The breakfast banquet was attended by Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, prime minister; Tahir al-Masri, speaker of the House of Representatives; al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, chief of the Royal Court; and his majesty's advisers.

In a speech at the banquet, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan welcomed the new deputies, congratulating them on the people's confidence. He said: We are in dire need for communication with this elite of people to find common denominators. These denominators require contemporary concepts and a comprehensive database, so that we can all work together to discuss our problems and concerns.

His royal highness asserted that collective action is a main pillar of successful work. While parliamentary blocs are operating, each based on its own understanding, we reassert that God supports collective action. We seek pluralism and diversification. We think, however, that concentration on collective action, bearing in mind individual differences, is sufficient to achieve success and progress. This is what we are working for in our field tours of the kingdom, in terms of having homogeneous working groups and allowing greater participation in an objective pattern and by way of unceasing communication.

His royal highness added: We believe in the need to upgrade the status of the human being and respect his dignity. We know that human rights are cumulative and cover all aspects of man's life. We assert that the foundations of man's dignity and human rights are law and justice.

His royal highness briefed the deputies on the latest developments in the peace process and the economic and political pressures on Jordan since the Gulf crisis. He said: I want to put you in the picture of what is taking place around us. Our objective approach stems from our insistence that the Palestinian decision is embodied in our practical support until the Palestinian people exercise their legitimate rights on their soil. We want to stress Jordan's pivotal role in maintaining stability in this part of the world amid Israeli attempts at hegemony. This profound understanding is protected by the international family in light of our status in the world.

When we speak about rights and duties, we think that duty entails action and development. In terms of rights, we do not want anybody to bestow our own rights on us. We want to shoulder our responsibilities. We have always insisted on a meaningful peace that positively influences the individual's life on the ground in our region.

On the question of economic reform, his highness said the Jordanian economic readjustment program is a model adopted worldwide. His highness cited a statement by the director general of the World Bank, saying there are fears for every economy in the world. Jordan, however, compared to several nations in the world, is a special case. This is one of numerous international references made in light of the distinguished Jordanian performance and skill.

His highness added: We have to have a comprehensive, broad view of political economy. We should also promote the public's awareness of the Jordanian domestic political rhetoric.

His highness went on: It is high time that we expressed the Jordanian will in everything we do. We should also place our issues within a proper framework and plan things for ourselves, instead of asking others to plan for us, given the challenges, fragmentation, and Balkanization.

His highness concluded: We should answer several questions on how the world looks at us and how we view ourselves within a context of political, economic, and social challenges.

His Majesty King Husayn's nice gesture by taking part in the breakfast with the deputies of the nation has left a good impression on the deputies, as yet another initiative by his majesty to communicate with all segments of the society.

Hizballah Attacks Israeli, SLA Posts 28 Dec

NC2912071893 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Hizballah fighters launched a series of attacks against the border strip area late last night. They attacked eight positions of the Israeli forces and the South Lebanese Army [SLA] in the west of the border strip, using automatic weapons, antitank rockets, and mortars. They also fired over 20 Katyusha rockets at the border strip. The Israeli forces and SLA returned the fire. Israeli and SLA artillery shelled villages controlled by Hizballah and large-scale clashes were reported. At around midnight last night, the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa and the abandoned Lebanese Army barracks came under artillery fire from Israeli positions in al-Zaffatah.

[In a related report taken from its overnight file, Paris AFP in English at 0103 GMT on 29 December adds the following: "Around 1:00 a.m. (2300 GMT) guerrillas opened fired on Kafr Tibnit, linking the central sector of the security zone with the rest of Lebanon, and the nearby region of 'Ali al-Tahir, where Israeli and SLA troops are gathered.

["In a third operation 'Ali al-Tahir was again attacked with rocket and automatic weapons fire, as were SLA positions at al-Dabshah and al-Burj, the sources said.

["Hizballah in a statement issued in Beirut said the new attacks were 'reprisals, which caused certain losses in the ranks of the enemy, against Zionist shelling of southern Lebanon.'

["The movement reported that all of its fighters were 'safe and sound,' and there were no immediate casualty reports from either Israel or the SLA."]

Nasrallah Comments on Trends Within Hizballah

NC2812165493 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 19 Dec 93 p 7

[Report on an interview with Hizballah Secretary General Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah by Muhammad Baqir Shari; place and date not given]

[Text] What is the reason for the "intensified" media campaign against Hizballah Secretary General Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah at this particular time? Who is behind this campaign, and what is its purpose? What is the truth regarding reports circulating in some circles, even ones that harbor good intentions toward the party, regarding the presence of several conflicting trends inside Hizballah? What is the truth about what is attributed to one of the "wings" inside the party—that it follows the orders of the al- Da'wah Party? Why has Hizballah remained silence about the suspension of the investigation into the airport bridge "massacre"? Is it true that there is a difference of opinion between Hizballah and 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, as reported by a London-based Arabic newspaper that is distributed in Beirut and the Arab capitals?

We posed these questions to the Hizballah secretary general, who has kept silent about everything being said these days.

Regarding the attempt by some local media to focus negative attention on Hizballah and the Islamic issue consistently and deliberately, the Hizballah secretary general said: We have consistently tried to disregard the "reports" and comments published in this weekly media platform. We have also avoided issuing any clarification or denial of any report or "information." If we get "involved" in denying everything that is published in this respect, we will then find ourselves compelled to issue countless "denials." And if we forget to deny any report or "information," the people will think that what has not been denied must be true. Hence our party's cadres have become used to these types of "reports" and "information," particularly because these cadres know that all these reports have shaky foundations. Sometimes they are so unjust that they are useful to us because they enhance our credibility when they are proved wrong. They only increase the people's confidence in us and their sympathy for us.

As for the existence of multiple trends inside the party, we stress that there are never identical views or opinions between one person and another, even if they are in the same organization or party. Differences in views are possible and are usually necessary. They are even a duty. Those who claim that there are "differences" or "divisions" inside the party must provide proof or evidence. We are not required to prove the falsity of these allegations, first, because the constant task of denial is a waste of time and a diversion from the task, and, second, because we are confident that these allegations will be automatically proved to be false with the passage of time. Our bases have sufficient immunity on this issue.

The party has recently undergone important experiences, especially the events that followed the signing of the "Gaza-Jericho" option. Can anyone of those who claim that there are such trends inside the party provide a single piece of evidence that there is a real division over any stand taken by the party during these important, and even grave, developments!

Regarding the campaign launched by a man of religion affiliated with Iran against the Hizballah secretary general, Nasrallah said: We are dealing with this phenomenon with the same spirit and method. We are not annoyed by this. We believe that it only strengthens the confidence in the leadership and also boosts popular sympathy for the party. The people are saying: Israel is seeking the physical liquidation of the party's leaders, in addition to trying to mar the party's reputation as a whole. Israel is the one that assassinated 'Abbas al-Musawi, former secretary general and prince of the martyrs, and is targeting the new secretary general and,

of course, all the other leaders. Whoever is waging such a campaign is only collaborating with the enemy, either intentionally or unintentionally. This "popular" view of the issue strengthens our self-confidence and stands. He added: This unjust "campaign" has exploited, for example, the party's decision to participate in the elections to attack us with the aim of "weakening" our stand by making these allegations before the leadership of the Islamic revolution in Iran. It was revolution leader Ayatollah Khamene'i who blessed our decision to enter the elections battle. Therefore, the opposition to the party's participation in the election became an opposition to the Islamic revolution's leader. Any attack on us over this issue is an attack on the revolution leader himself.

There was one beneficial outcome of this "campaign" against us, namely some people's accusations that we were working to establish an Islamic rule or an Islamic state. This helped us because it absolved us of something that others regarded as an "accusation" and made our activities acceptable to circles that accused us of working to impose the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon. We do not hide our belief in the rule of Islam, but we do not want to impose our views by force. We call for following God through wisdom, example, and conviction.

Regarding the allegations made in the campaign against the Hizballah secretary general that there is a trend that is following the al-Da'wah Party inside Hizballah, the secretary general stressed that those who have joined Hizballah from the al-Da'wah Party have left their former affiliation behind and have become part of the Hizballah trend, like the Amal Movement members who joined Hizballah. Even many members who were in the al-Da'wah Party might criticize the ideas and methods they adopted during their former party affiliation, as former Amal members did. Martyr 'Abbas himself was originally a member of the al-Da'wah Party, yet he was a splendid embodiment of the Hizballah trend.

We told the Hizballah secretary general: We heard from you more than seven years ago that those who joined Hizballah from other organizations brought the methods and traditions of their previous organizations to Hizballah and tried to practice them within the party. Nasrallah stressed that this was at the beginning. Over time, everyone has blended into the same melting pot. One example of this is the al-Da'wah Party. Underground activity was one of its doctrines. Some of its former members who joined Hizballah carried with them the spirit of underground activity, even when there was no need for secrecy. But such habits have changed with time, as I mentioned earlier.

When we told him that the presence of the al-Da'wah Party in many countries and places could, due to human nature, affect the former members who joined Hizballah, the secretary general said: Those former al-Da'wah Party members who are members of Hizballah have absolutely no relationship with those who were in the al-Da'wah Party in any other place. Those who joined Hizballah from the al-Da'wah Party are very critical of the mistakes the al-Da'wah Party made, just as any other party could make mistakes.

With regard to some published reports about the fact that Hasan Nasrallah brought misfortune to the party, he said: I did not read what was written about this issue carefully. But such statements are contradictory, if not ignorant. Those who wrote such things also said that Hizballah has become stronger, has established its private economic institutions, increased the number of its members, and spread like wildfire in the south or other areas of the country recently. How could that have happened, particularly during the last two years—according to what they say—when these two years are the ones when I assumed the position of secretary general of the party, and I, according to their claims, succeeded in managing the party with skill and professionalism? And at the same time, they claim that I brought misfortune to the party.

On the subject of relations with 'Allamah Fadlallah, the Hizballah secretary general affirmed that he has a distinguished relationship with 'Allamah Fadlallah and that he always meets with him, listens to his advice, and discusses important and sensitive matters with him. He has never had a real difference of opinion with him. Yes, the organizational state of the party is very different from the important religious personality, which is respected and held in high esteem by all. Due to his nonorganizational position in the party, 'Allamah Fadlallah could, for example, receive people we are not compelled to receive. He could establish relations with people whom we see no need to establish relations with. In addition, certain topics could be discussed, and we could have our own opinion on them. This is something that does not bother the 'allamah. But there was never an argument in the sense some media have been reporting.

Regarding the silence on the results of the investigation into the airport bridge incident [in which the Army shot at Hizballah demonstrators], he said: We were not silent and will not remain silent. This incident has infiltrated our conscience and even the psychological makeup of our party. It will never be allowed to fade away. We are waiting for the issue to be raised on a broader and more significant dimension in the Chamber of Deputies. It is true that some sides want us to temporarily quiet what they call the exaggerated attack on the state regarding this matter, but this will not change anything for us.

I was the one who, from the podium and from above the heads of the martyrs, made direct speeches about the president of the Republic and the prime minister. I held them responsible for the incident and demanded that they resign and leave if justice is not meted out in this matter. Some sides described our restrained stand after the massacre as being of the highest level of heroism. Our enemies described our stand as cowardly and hesitant. However, let it be made clear to all: We are the ones who maintain public security and general law and order. We

have no time to waste on bitter condemnations of anyone. We have a project that is grander than all the narrow-minded political projects and gimmicks: confronting the dangers that are looming over our country and nation. Our fight against the Zionist enemy is a more noble goal than the fight against the insignificant sides. This does not mean, however, that the blood of our brothers and people can be shed by a murderous group. So far, they have not determined whose responsibility it was. Was it the responsibility of the president, the defense minister, the prime minister, the interior minister, or the security bodies? They have not told us anything clear about this matter. They think that the issue will die over time. We will address them in the same way that the poet Muhammad Mahdi al- Jawahiri addressed the ruler of Iraq when the latter killed his brother Ja'far in the Battle of the Bridge in Baghdad:

Whether you know it or not,

Victims' wounds are a mouth,

Unlike that of one giving testimony

Or another begging for mercy.

Hizballah's Qasim on Christopher Visit, Peace

NC2812174793 Beirut AL-'AHD in Arabic 17 Dec 93 p 3

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] During a rally held by Hizballah in al-Ghaziyah town on the occasion of the death of Ayatollah Golpayegani, Shaykh Na'im Qasim, Hizballah's deputy secretary general, said that Christopher's visit to the region sought to notify the world that the Syrian-Israeli track is active. His eminence said: We believe that this visit has not achieved anything, although it presented certain secondary issues that sought to boost Israel's morale, such as the departure of Jews from Syria and the dispatch of a U.S. Congressional committee to the region. He said that this is part of a campaign that aimed to make the world feel that there is specific progress in the negotiations.

Shaykh Qasim said that Lebanon's joining the negotiations on the basis of the Madrid conference was an enormous mistake. He said: Everything so far confirms our viewpoint that Lebanon's participation in the negotiations was an attempt to drag Lebanon into negotiations over the issues of peace and land. The annexation of land by the Israelis demonstrates their expansionist designs.

His eminence then dealt with the issue of the U.S. investigating committee. He said that this committee seeks to boost the Israelis' morale, because the fate of the Israeli prisoners in Lebanon is known to everyone. He added that international parties intervened and are aware of their fate. However, he said that the talks should have focused on the fate of hundreds of detainees held in the enemy prisons, particularly in al-Khiyam, where the prisoners suffer enormously.

Shaykh Qasim said: It's unreasonable that the fate of aggressors is discussed, while the fate of innocent people, who were detained in their homes and who are defending this land, is not discussed. Therefore, we see no need to meet with any committee because it is part of the campaign to promote Israeli topics rather than resolving the issue of the prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons.

Shaykh Qasim emphasized that Israeli pilot Ron Arad has never been held by us nor do we know his fate or his whereabouts.

He asked about the pledge made by the president, that he will become part of the resistance if the Zionist enemy fails to withdraw from the land. He said: When the president assumed power, he said that Resolution 425 will be implemented within two or three months. It's now been three years and nothing has happened. The Americans are surprised over the talk in Lebanon about Resolution 425, because they do not recognize or approve of this resolution. The president said that if Israel does not withdraw, all the Lebanese will become resistance. Why hasn't he and the others become part of the resistance? They continue to beg the United States to change certain wording in their decisions.

Al-Asad To Be 'Roaring Voice of Arab Rights'

JN2812155693 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: An Arab partner in the peace process has violated the parameters to which Arabs obligated themselves. It has allowed itself to be dragged to the Israeli agenda. But, this should not mean the end of the inter-Arab coordination that began with the Madrid conference and continued throughout the Washington talks. It is all the more important that this does not happen because we are on the eve of two major events: a summit between Presidents al-Asad and Clinton and the preliminary consultations of the chief delegates to the Washington talks with the U.S. Administration.

This, along with Syrian concern for a united Arab stand, is the backdrop for President Hafiz al-Asad's message to King Husayn and al-Shar's talks in Jordan yesterday.

Jordan has withstood foreign pressure to conclude a separate deal with Israel. The Jordanian brothers underscored their adherence to a just and comprehensive peace and did not cut their coordination with Syria. In the meantime, Syria and Lebanon stuck to bilateral coordination in the best interests of the three countries and the Arab cause. The defection of the Palestinian partners from the parameters of a dignified, comprehensive settlement should in no way mean that the peace process has run its course. Indeed, the Palestinian partners have incurred considerable losses, which they could have been spared if they had adhered to the resolutions of the Damascus, Amman, and Beirut talks.

It is now universally acknowledged that the peace process stands no chance without Syria—the conscience, throbbing heart and watchful eye of the Arab nation. Syria's policies are always inspired by a genuine concern for supreme Arab interests that takes into account all the Arab partners. Syria never bargains away any rights or territory or strikes a separate deal. For Syria, there is no choosing between the Golan Heights and south Lebanon, or any occupied Arab territory, for that matter.

The kind of just and comprehensive peace sought by Syria is a far cry from the option of separate deals. A just and comprehensive peace will ensure both the interests of individual Arab states and pan-Arab interests. The implementation of UN Security Council resolutions is the core of the peace process. Syria will be a big loser if it allows itself to fall into the trap of separate deals; consider the woes and difficulties and blackmail the Palestinian partners are experiencing now. The Palestinian-Israeli accord clearly skirts UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The accord frees Israel of any obligation to vacate occupied Palestinian territory. Israeli negotiators are reluctant even to cede as little as a single square meter of territory to their Palestinian interlocutors. Under the Gaza-Jericho accord, Palestinian rights are to be addressed at a future date, as is territorial withdrawal.

In contrast, the underlying principle of the Washington talks is an exchange of land for peace. Syria and Lebanon have made it clear over and over that an Israeli withdrawal from the entire Golan Heights and south Lebanon must form the bedrock of any settlement. Short of such withdrawals, peace will remain as elusive as ever.

Israel has no right to expect Arabs to give it both peace and territory. If they did, they would not only lose their territories, but would infringe upon the rights of the refugees made homeless by the Zionists, violate international law, whet the appetite of Israeli aggressors, and set a precedent in international relations.

Such degrading settlements will never win any Arab country's support. There is a lesson to be learned from what is taking place on the Palestinian front. Only an equitable and dignified peace that removes occupation and reinstates Arab rights can survive in the Middle East. This is the message that President al-Asad will carry to President Clinton. President al-Asad will be the roaring voice of Arab rights. Any peace that is not grounded in justice and that fails to satisfy arab ambitions is just worthless. There is a world of difference between a solid, and, therefore, acceptable peace and lame settlements that only fan the flames of hatred and sow the seeds of dangerous eruptions in the region.

The Arabs have always drawn strength from their unity and adherence to their rights and refusal to give up their territories. We should never lose sight of the fact that, despite the disarray in Arab ranks, the Arabs are, after all, one nation that has access to such resources that earn it a place in the front ranks of dynamic and active nations.

Iran

Foreign Minister Meets Azerbaijani Counterpart

LD2912114593 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] In the first round of negotiations between the foreign ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, issues of mutual interest, ways to expand and consolidate Tehran-Baku ties, as well as important regional issues were discussed.

The foreign ministers of the two countries also talked about ways to upgrade the level of bilateral cooperation within the framework of the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] and the organization of the Caspian Sea littoral states.

In this meeting, the foreign minister of Azerbaijan asked Iran to continue its efforts as before to resolve issues pertaining to the Karabakh dispute, the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territory, and the establishment of an honorable peace in the region.

On the basis of a proposal put forward by the foreign minister of Azerbaijan, it was decided that in order to prepare the ground for a border treaty between Iran and Azerbaijan, a joint committee should be formed to study the matter. The joint committee, in which officials representing both countries will participate, will meet regularly in Tehran and Baku.

Gasan Gasanov, the Azerbaijani foreign minister, arrived in Tehran this morning at the head of a high-ranking political delegation, and was welcomed by the Foreign Affairs Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

Gilan Governor Views Relations With Azerbaijan

NC2612112793 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 15 Dec 93 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES City Desk]

[Text] Tehran—Eng. 'Ali Akbar Taha'i, Governor-general of Gilan Province bordering the Azerbaijan Republic refuted allegations that Colonel Alikram Gumbatov was recently in the Talesh and Monkaran region of Iran planning for the separation of an autonomous Azerbaijan.

Taha'i said that Islamic Republic of Iran's policy is based on mutual respect for territorial integrity of all countries recognized by international laws.

Talking exclusively to the TEHRAN TIMES the governor-general categorically denied Alikram's presence in Iran and Iran's intervention in the affairs of Azerbaijan.

He noted, "Crossing the border to and from Iran and Azerbaijan is possible only by obtaining entry visa."

Taha'i further said that usually human and vehicular traffic carries on uninterruptedly, but have halted due to problems raised by the Karabakh war.

He said that in the eight months of the current Iranian year (beginning March 21) 500,000 tons of goods have been transported from the border of Gilan Province, hoping that the figure would rise to 800,000 tons by the end of the year.

Taha'i noted that goods are sent to other parts of the country through the border province, adding "We view the Azerbaijan Republic as a passage through which to send goods to other countries."

"We are working to transform Anzali Port to an international trade port."

The Gilan governor went on to say that so far several commodity exhibitions have been held in the two countries; all have been welcomed by the people.

He referred to the enterprises in progress in Gilan and said the Rasht-Qazvin freeway, Astara-Anzali railroad and coastal highway are under study in light of the encroaching Caspian Sea water.

The governor of Gilan Province said that Iranian and Russian experts are studying the causes of the sea water progress and exploring ways to combat this problem.

"We are studying to choose the best among the plans offered by the Iranian and Russian experts," Taha'i said.

Elaborating on tourist attractions, Taha'i said "We are going to construct a 4-star hotel in Gilan in an effort to employ the private sector's capital and foreign investors within the bounds of the constitution.

He named the other industries of the province: Gilan Wood and Paper-mill, Iran Poplin, Pars Shahab Factory, and Pars Khazar Factory, all of which meet the domestic requirements.

Referring to the earthquake two years ago in the province, Taha'i said 80 percent of the damaged area has been reconstructed. The quake destroyed 150,000 residential units.

Assembly of Experts Resumes Session in Qom

LD2812134093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The second meeting of the fourth annual session of the Assembly of Experts for Leadership Affairs, chaired by Ayatollah Meshkini, convened today in Qom's Dar al-Shafa school and was attended by the majority of the Assembly's members. At this meeting, two of the clauses proposed by the [Assembly's] commission for Articles 107 and 109 of the [Islamic Republic of Iran's] Constitution were passed.

Today's meeting of experts for leadership affairs also discussed and passed a single article related to the amendment of a section of the internal regulations of the Assembly of Experts.

Four pre-agenda speakers spoke before the meeting started attending to the meeting's agenda.

President Briefs Experts

LD2912114493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] At a meeting with members of the Assembly of Experts today, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani described as unavoidable fundamental government measures to carry out infrastructural work and to sever dependence on the outside world in order to smooth the way of the country's progress and reach self-sufficiency.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani paid tribute to the late Ayatollah Sheykh Mohammad La'ini, a member of the Assembly of Experts, from Mazandaran Province. He described the problems facing the country due to official mismanagement and incompetence during the monarchical era. He said: There has been a gradual change in the country's economic structure, which relied on revenues from oil and other national resources. In addition to the domestic provision of many raw materials for industries, we have now reached export levels in the production of some goods.

Referring to the fact that those fundamental tasks were accomplished through adherence to Islam, the president said: In his lifetime the late imam solved many problems which had slowed down the performance of officials. And now, too, the esteemed leader oversees matters as a wise and competent leader familiar with current issues.

He stressed the necessity for religious scholars and clergymen to be familiar with current issues in order to explain the government's socio-political policy to the people.

Before the president's speech, Ayatollah Meshkini, chairman of the Assembly of Experts, thanked the president and the government for their policies in carrying out infrastructural and fundamental tasks, and made a speech about the country's current issues.

Interior Ministry Announces Majles By-Election Date

LD2912120493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Majlis by-elections will be held on Friday, 28 January 1994, for Natanz constituency, the Interior Ministry announced. Candidates are asked to register at the local governorate.

Ayatollah Khamene'i Stresses Importance of 'Marja'iyat'

LD2812125493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1053 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Yesterday, on the occasion of the auspicious birth anniversary of the lord of the faithful, His Holiness Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him, a number of officials and personnel from government organizations and revolutionary institutions and military personnel were received by his eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i. In the meeting, the eminent leader of the Islamic revolution delivered a speech in which he praised the most worthy lord of the faithful, 'Ali, peace be upon him, and described him as a model for all officials in all the sections of the system.

The leader of the Islamic revolution also referred to the important issue of marja'iyat [the position of source of religious emulation] in the world of Shiism and, noting the demise of Grand Ayatollah Golpayegani, he stressed that the Qom theological seminary has a strong theological capability and that there are many prominent religious personalities in that center of theological learning.

During the past few days and since the demise of grand Ayatollah Golpayegani, the question of the marja'iyat in the world of Shiism has been in the air. Some people had used the occasion to sow doubts, suggesting that with the demise of that worthy marja' [source of emulation] there would be difficulties in connection with the marja'iyat of the world of Shiism.

There is no doubt that the demise of any one of the eminent ulema is an irreparable loss for the Islamic community. Nevertheless, theological centers possess such great theological wealth that they can consistently perpetuate the marja'iyat in all its vitality. The eminent leader of the Islamic revolution said in this regard: At all times, there exist personalities and dignitaries in the Qom theological seminary whom Shiites will have no problems in emulating. Today, too, Exalted God, in His wisdom and mercy, has put grand Ayatollah Araki, who is a sacred wealth for the Qom seminary, before the people for them to emulate.

The eminent leader of the revolution referred to the capabilities of grand Ayatollah Araki and added: Exalted God gave him a long life, preserved his presence of mind and gave this sacred resource spiritual, theological and mental strength, and today theological seminaries are filled with such resources thanks to the past efforts of great religious jurisconsult.

The remarks of Ayatollah Khamene'i referred to the wealth and richness of theological capacities in the Qom seminary and its ability to uphold the marja'iyat. Basically, the issue of marja'iyat is a part of the theological and cultural heritage of our seminaries. For example, Ayatollah Borujerdi was not very well known by the

majority of the people until he became a source of emulation, but, from that time onward, the greatness and illustriousness of his personality became clearer and clearer with the passage of time.

Imam Khomeyni, God's mercy be upon him, too, appeared like a blazing sun after Ayatollah Borujerdi and gave a special splendor to the marja'iyat with his incredible theological and jurisprudential personality.

All this is testimony to the fact that the marja'iyat will never come to an end, and there will always be a sacred wealth to draw on in the seminaries for filling the marja'iyat of Shiism.

IPO Reaffirms Support for Ayatollah Araki

LD2312134693 Tehran IRNA in English 0953 GMT 23 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 23, IRNA—The Islamic Propagation Organization (IPO) in a statement reiterated that Grand Ayatollah Mohammad 'Ali Araki is the only marja'e taqlid (a religious jurisprudent whose rulings in all religious matters are followed by people) for the Shiite Muslims.

After the departure of Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Golpayegani on December 9, the Teachers' Society of Qom seminary, comprising prominent ulema, announced Grand Ayatollah Araki as marja'e taqlid.

The IPO statement was issued in response to queries by various Shiite organizations, institutions and Muslims from throughout the world following distribution of counterfeit statements.

The IPO deplored that in some parts of the country and the world, including the Indian subcontinent, counterfeit statements which are contrary to the said decision have been issued to sow discord among Shiite Muslims.

The counterfeits bear the name of a large number of Iranian and non-Iranian ulema and scholars as signatories of the statements.

The organization condemned such vicious attempts that bear no fruit but sow discord and are detrimental to the interests of the world of Islam and Shiite Muslims.

Stressing that the Islamic world was faced with numerous complicated problems, the IPO called on Shiite Muslims to preserve their vigilance and avoid discord.

It also called on Shiite Muslims to unite their ranks to materialize ideals of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeyni and goals of the leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i.

'Political Conflict' Behind Israeli-Hizballah Activity

NC2912082393 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Commentary by the News Analysis and Commentaries Group]

[Text] Throughout yesterday and last night, the Lebanese Hizballah attacked Zionist positions in response to the air, missile, and artillery attacks by the Zionist regime and Lahd's mercenaries and inflicted casualties and damage on the ranks of the occupiers. Retaliating against the Islamic Resistance operations against its forces, the Zionist regime sent its warplanes to south Lebanon to bomb residential areas. Throughout last night, airplanes and helicopters were seen in the sky above south Lebanon and were chased away several times by the Islamic Resistance's anti-air attacks.

Some experts believe there is a political objective behind the extensive Israeli onslaught. Zionist Prime Minister Rabin, speaking in an interview last night, accused Syria of not stopping guerrilla operations and Hizballah resistance. These remarks by Rabin in tandem with the Israeli air attacks on south Lebanon appear to be a coordinated effort by Israel to include south Lebanon in the agenda of the talks between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, who will meet in Geneva in around 17 days. The only open front in the confrontation with the Zionist regime is the one in south Lebanon and Israel's efforts throughout the years to close this front and consequently end the resistance have been futile.

An Islamic source in Lebanon says the resistance by the Islamic forces and Hizballah and the answer to the criminal Zionists provided by air and ground attacks are designed to let the Zionist regime know that the southern Lebanese front will not be affected by the Clinton-al-Asad talks in Geneva and that the struggle against the occupier will continue uninterrupted as long as the occupation does. Thus, political experts believe that behind the Zionist regime's attack and the retaliation by the resistance in south Lebanon lies a political conflict rather than a military development.

Tehran Radio on Relations, Cooperation With Turkey

NC2812210593 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 22 Dec 93

[Unattributed commentary: "Outcome of the Talks Between Tehran and Ankara"]

[Text] Vice President Habibi and Turkey's high-ranking officials reached new agreements in the talks they held over the last few days on bilateral relations between Tehran and Ankara and regional cooperation in the economic and political fields. Among the main issues

Hasan Habibi and the Turkish officials agreed on were the sale of natural gas to Turkey, the laying of a natural gas pipeline between Turkey and Iran, and the strengthening of the two countries' cooperation on security vis-a-vis the struggle waged against terrorism. The ministers of heavy industries and transportation accompanied Hasan Habibi to Turkey from 20 to 22 December. The two sides found the opportunity to discuss matters related to land and railway transportation, the participation of regional countries in projects related to aircraft manufacturing, and the construction of highways and railways to link Central Asia with Turkey and Europe. Several agreements were reached on these matters.

As neighbors, Turkey and Iran have historic and cultural relations. Furthermore, their cooperation within the framework of the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] has added to the importance of their relations. It is common knowledge that the ECO covers a large area with a population of 300 million people. Considering the ECO's expectation of improved regional cooperation, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, which are the founding members of this organization, have to make an intensified effort to promote their bilateral and regional relations.

Meanwhile, Iran and Turkey also have to cooperate on measures required to ensure the security on their common border. In view of the importance of this issue, the two countries have already reached the necessary agreements for border security against acts of terrorism. Regarding regional matters, Turkey, Iran, and Syria have held tripartite talks on Iraq's latest situation. The outcome of their talks and the bilateral relations between Turkey and Iran indicate the importance the two countries attach to peace and stability in the region.

As Habibi stressed in his talks with the Turkish officials in Ankara, Iran and Turkey have the capacity and potential to cooperate in every domain, particularly in the cultural, economic, and political fields. Considering the level of understanding in the relations between Tehran and Ankara and the favorable conditions for cooperation between the two countries, Iran and Turkey are expected to cooperate more effectively on bilateral and regional issues.

Afghan Envoy Urges Slowing Repatriation of Refugees

LD2612101893 Tehran IRNA in English 0953 GMT 26 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA—Afghan ambassador here Seyyed Kheyrkhah called on the Iranian Government to slow down the trend of repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland, reported the bi-lingual weekly 'KAYHAN HAVAI' in its latest issue.

Kheyrkhah, exclusively interviewed by KAYHAN HAVAI, said that Kabul "cannot prepare enough facilities for the return of more than 300,000 refugees every year."

He called for a reconsideration of a joint proposal by Iran and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for a "three-year repatriation plan" noting that Afghanistan needed more time to cope with the trend of refugees return.

Some 850,000 Afghan refugees have returned home over the past nine months and over 1,900,000 more are still living in Iran, said the ambassador.

Praising Iran for providing the refugees with proper living conditions, Kheyrkhah criticized the lack of adequate international assistance to refugees and said out of 350,000 Afghan refugees who left Iran, only 50,000 received UNHCR's aids.

Indian Ambassador Expects Increased Trade With Iran

LD2612135593 Tehran IRNA in English 1225 GMT 26 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA—Trade between Iran and India last year stood at dlrs. 550 million and is expected to increase next year, said an Indian diplomat here.

The Indian ambassador to Tehran Ramesh Chandra Arora in an interview with KAYHAN HAVAI, the overseas edition of KAYHAN, also said Iran was the best and the most economical route for India to reach Central Asia, adding that it is a long way for his country to reach Central Asian markets through the Black Sea which is neither secure nor economical.

Referring to India's vote against the United Nations resolution which accused Iran of abusing human rights, Arora said the issue of human rights is an "instrument" employed by the West for "political purposes".

Pointing to gas projects, the Indian ambassador stressed that the final stages of the feasibility study for laying a gas pipline from Iran's Qeshm island to India are now underway and will be finalized next month.

"Now we require 240 million cubic meters of gas per day and our gas requirements will increase as new industrial projects become operational," the Indian diplomat announced.

Referring to structure of the United Nations as "unfair", Arora said "the time has come to bring about changes in the charter of the U.N. and restructure the Security Council".

Commenting on the Kashmir issue, the ambassador said 120 million Muslims live peacefully in India without any problem, adding that the same applies to Kashmir where Muslims form a part of India's Muslim community.

On measures the Indian Government has taken to reconstruct the Babri mosque, razed by Hindu fundamentalists last December, the Indian diplomat concluded that the Supreme Court has decided to build a temple and a mosque in the disputed area.

Minister on Cushioning Impact of Economic Change

LD2812175593 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Commerce Minister Yahya ol-Eshaq described the country's economic conditions as transitory and moving toward a new status. In an interview with correspondents today, the commerce minister made the above statement, and added: The government is intent on cushioning the impact of this transition through distribution of basic essential commodities and facilitating imports in general, such as foodstuffs, according to the existing demand.

Furthermore, the commerce minister said: If a crisis arises with regard to any basic essential commodity, the Commerce Ministry will feel dutybound to intervene and take appropriate steps to boost the supply, to remedy the shortage and prevent the deepening of the crisis.

The commerce minister then referred to this year's budget, in which 1 billion tomans [toman consists of 10 rials] has been allocated to establishing a fund for export guarantees, as well as publicity and training in the area of exports. He added: We believe that the sums which the second plan has allocated to exports will certainly make a healthy return. We expect this return to be many times more than the sum initially invested.

Central Bank's Economic Policies Criticized

NC2612114293 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 15 Dec 93 p 2

[Editorial: "Unfavorable Economic Policies and Intense Currency Rates' Hike"]

[Text] Foreign currency rates have markedly surged over the past few days, prompting some claims to the effect that the bank and economy officials no longer wield control over the foreign currency market on account of the country's special economic conditions.

The rial's intense and minute-by-minute slump as compared to other major currencies—especially the U.S. dollar—and the conspicuous difference between the Central Bank and the so-called free market rates, the Central Bank's adherence to the free market rates, and the rise in the official rates do not promise a rosy prospect for Iran's economy in the short term.

Presently, there is a marked difference of about 430 rials between Central Bank and free market rates of the U.S. dollar, flourishing brokering and penchant for currency trade and drawing productive works to a stalemate.

The prime cause of this should be sought. In the First Plan, the economy and industries' officials invested huge capital (about $14 billion) on promotion of industries, production, infrastructural activities, and non-oil exports.

They unfortunately failed to equip themselves with a weapon to be used at times such as the present when the oil prices have drastically slumped in a season fit for sales at high prices.

If they had taken the requisite measure, they would have been able to maintain a moderate foreign currency income and stave off impacts of oil price fall on all economic activities and enterprises. Also this would have barred the perturbing rise in foreign currency rates, ensuing due to enhanced demand and decreased supply.

The wide gap between the Central Bank and free market rates has enticed many to engage as dealers and brokers. Other upshots are also in view, each of which could have its own effects.

The psychological impacts of foreign currency rates' increase and the possibility of even higher rates in future have compelled many individuals and firms, probably needless of foreign currency, to go into the business and do some "stockpiling".

In addition, some production centers which do not get all their needed foreign currency from the banks turn to the free market to provide for their currency requirements.

The Central Bank's inadequate system of foreign currency distribution and allocation is deemed the root case of such fluctuations in the foreign currency market.

Currently, in view of the slump in the foreign incomes, the Central Bank and the economy officials should primarily minimize the currency expenditures in different projects and industries. They should, moreover, stringently harness unnecessary foreign currency expenses in a drive to bring about optimal allocation.

This move will insure manifold benefits. Through it, the producers, travellers, and sick people will get hold of their needed foreign currency. The "panic demands", prompted by market fluctuations and by no prospect of future price decreases will be slashed. In other words, the psychological maladies spurred by the fluctuations will be bridled.

Consequently, in the present crisis, the economy officials should first and foremost muster efforts to remove the foreign currency bottlenecks, increase the oil price, and adopt sound industrial and production policies. They should also embark upon optimal allocation of the available foreign currency to stave off this quagmire.

Majles Research Center Chairman Views Economy

NC2712080093 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 13 Dec 93 pp 3, 6

[First installment of an unspecified number of "exclusive" interviews with Dr. Mohammad Javad Larijani, head of the Majles Research Center; place and date not given]

[Excerpts] [RESALAT] What are the major pivots and the weak and strong points of the First Plan and how do you assess the implementation of this Plan?

[Larijani] A detailed and technical assessment of the First Plan is a difficult task which we cannot deal with here. [passage omitted]

However, there are four major pivots that we can consider in order to improve the Second Plan and we can discuss the issue on the basis of these four pivots.

The first pivot was the movement toward a free market to achieve increased production. One of the major slogans of the First Plan was to increase production and to achieve market dynamics by creating competition in the private sector.

The second pivot was the attraction of investment from the private sector both at home and abroad. Attracting investments is the kinetic energy that is needed for production.

The third pivot was privatization, since this Plan—both as far as attracting investments and increasing production were concerned—needed the privatization of state-run units.

The fourth pivot was putting together programs that could, in one way or another, ensure the main needs of the people. These programs are known as social insurance and consist of general insurance schemes and laws that meet the minimum needs of people's lives.

We can assess the First Five-Year Plan on the basis of these four pivots. As far as increased production and moving toward a free market are concerned, we should say that the government has taken courageous steps in this direction. It is not a matter of production output only. But frankly speaking, the wheels of production started to move and the single parity rate for foreign exchange was a very significant step.

The formation of various production units was a positive step. But privatization was the major weak point of the government. When the basis for free market dynamics are laid, if production units which should compete are not privatized, the only advantage is that the prices for goods and services offered are determined only through the volume of sales in the free market, without enjoying all the benefits of privatization which include competition, improved quality, higher quantity, and lower production costs.

As far as units in the public sector are concerned, it does not make any difference what their production costs are since the final products are sold at high prices and no efforts are made to improve production. I believe that the most major objective of the First Plan which was to move toward competition in which the private sector can be active, produce, and shift matters from the hands of the government into the hands of the people. This was not obtained because the issue of privatization did not proceed.

Of course privatization does not mean that we place large factories in the hands of specific people. Privatization is a difficult task and there are various experiences as far as privatization is concerned in the world. [passage omitted]

There are certain important and key elements that are necessary for attracting investment. One of these elements is security and the other is profitability. In other words, programs should be formulated in such a way that investments are made in those fields that the government wants. And security means that we introduce laws and regulations that will allow the investor to speculate on the outcome of his investments.

Our major weak point in the Plan has been social insurance in general, and the government's intention to keep its expenditures low is not justifiable. But, at any rate, the insurance plan that the government has handed over to the Majles for approval will be among the major plans [in the Second Plan]. [passage omitted]

The major problem in the First Plan was the lack of a basic theoretical framework. This problem should be overcome in the Second Plan.

In general, a healthy, strong, and modern economy are three points that we should take into consideration so that our objectives will be further clarified. A healthy economy is not just an economy that has high exports. It is not just an economy that can compete in the world. A healthy economy is structured according to the characteristics of a country, meaning that it is an economy within the framework of which people can easily obtain their basic needs.

The government relies on itself as far as supplying strategic items such as foodstuffs, energy, electricity, and medicine are concerned. Generally speaking, the domestic market is active. In the phase of making the economy healthy, the government should protect the economy. In other words, we should have protectionist policies.

Throughout the First Plan, our theory was that protectionism is a bad thing and that we should have an open door policy. I think that this is a major problem and that in the new era ahead, we should have a protectionist policy and not an open door policy. [passage omitted]

[RESALAT] The First Plan envisaged $120 billion of income resources. Why was this income not achieved and why did foreign debts emerge? Since some people foresee that in the Second Plan our income will be about half this amount, what do you think we should do in the face of such limited incomes?

[Larijani] The foreseen amount was not achieved. In other words, the First Plan was compiled on the basis of a $120-billion income resource. But by the end of the Plan, this amount was not obtained.

As for how much of the debts that were created are according to the Plan or according to law, and to how much of these debts are logical are issues that we should deal with separately.

We should definitely compile a program for the repayment of these commitments. Of course, the government has made forecasts for their repayment. But these forecasts may not have been fulfilled in the best way possible. The second point is that in my opinion we should accept as a principle the fact that creating commitments is not necessarily a bad thing. For example, countries that are relatively successful have both debts and high incomes.

Malaysia has about a $20 billion debt. But, at the same time, it has an extremely high production output and its income is higher than its debts. [passage omitted]

Basically, the absence of a precise program for investments resulted in our starting to implement many very large projects. We should have not started these projects. In addition, the fact that we did not set any priorities in the First Plan is very bad.

In other words, anyone could come and invest as much as he wanted in any project. But this should not be, and basically we should not have undertaken any commitments as far as this is concerned. But in many places, if today we have to borrow in order to invest in a project by considering the nature of the project that we want to implement and what markets there are for its final product both at home and in neighboring countries, then we will be acting wisely. [passage omitted]

[RESALAT] In view of the revision in decisions, will new decisions like, for example, the decision on foreign exchange not be reviewed?

[Larijani] This new decision involves some pressures, and if we justify the reason for these pressures, then they will be mitigated. These pressures stem from the fact that there are many small industries that are fully dependent on other countries for their raw materials, which they purchase with foreign exchange. In order to receive this foreign exchange, any item that is imported should be registered and paid for through the bank. These documents are needed for the customs authorities, who will not allow the product to be cleared without them. What does this mean?

This means that these industrialists go to the bank and wait their turn and receive foreign exchange on the basis of availability. Meanwhile, production is delayed in the process and possibly some industrialists think of closing down their factories since it is not profitable for them any longer or because they cannot purchase raw material from abroad. Thus, production falls and unemployment is created. A drop in production, in turn, leads to an increase in prices. I believe that these two mechanisms—that is, price hikes because of a drop in production and the creation of unemployment—are two issues that can be disconcerting for the government and something that led to its very good decision on foreign exchange rates. [passage omitted]

The policies that have been adopted during the past few weeks are very correct policies. The only thing is that the government should implement them precisely and insist that they be implemented. And if this happens, then our cash flow problems may be solved in less than six months and we will be in a favorable situation as far as repaying our commitments are concerned.

I would like to add something to the issue of incomes. I believe that our views on oil and the ways this product is used are very wrong. In other words, the government is extracting oil in any way it can and is exporting crude oil. However, our oil resources are a divine blessing. In other words, despite what some think, our oil income is our guarantee of independence in the world today, and this oil income is only a small part of our blessing, which we are unable to use correctly.

One of my ideas, one that is being worked on at the Research Center, is to determine the true position of the oil industry within the general framework of the country's development. In other words, we should revise our views on where oil stands as far as our development is concerned. Our oil industry does not mean that the government export crude oil. This is not an oil industry. Our oil industry should become a pattern similar to what the developed countries have. In other words, it should be based on the patterns that exist in Canada, Britain, and the United States, and not on—say—patterns like Saudi Arabia, Libya, and other oil-exporting countries.

We should definitely try to transform our oil industry into a resource for the sale of oil products. We have an oil industry that has 80 years of experience and more than 10,000 experts. Even the refineries that the government is running now have employees that are almost double the number needed and management is not good, either. I want to say that these refineries can—with private management—become extremely profitable.

Therefore, I think that we do not have any problems as far as the Constitution is concerned, because this industry is like the other mines and foreign trade. And the fact that it is under state supervision does not mean that it is the government that should extract and refine the oil or even manufacture motor oil or some other product.

There are tens of thousands of oil derivatives. I believe that we should open up this industry to the people and the people should start to work on it and to invest in it. Of course, the people cannot go to explore for oil in the middle of the ocean. But they can reach a point where they can also have large oil exploration companies.

There are many countries, like South Korea which started a shipbuilding industry and it took them 20 years to reach the point that they are today. If we work correctly, 20 years is not a long time.

Therefore, we should realize what the true position of the oil industry is. As for its significance, I do not foresee that the era of oil and fossil fuel is over and that after some time all the world will be using atomic, nuclear, and even solar energy. No, this is not so.

In other words, oil is an immense resource the significance of which is growing more and more each day and it is still unrivaled. Oil and gas have not found a suitable rival in the field of energy resources. But the resources that we have in the Persian Gulf are extracted in a way that has allowed all the colonialist countries to come to the region, suck the oil, and take it; and in 20 years' time they will hand over this area to us after they have sucked up all its resources and led it to complete ecological destruction.

At any rate, the Westerners are plundering this wealth from our region. The world's most important oil resources are in the Persian Gulf. We should think of the era that is ahead of us. As an independent country we can help to maintain our country as a large oil industry when all the oil resources of the other countries have dried up.

I always consider the oil industry as a great national backbone and not as a resource for crude oil. And our strategy in this field should change.

Therefore, as far as the issue of debts and commitments in development economics is concerned, it is not as though we should completely set this idea aside and consider oil to be our sole and initial income. This is not correct. We should find a way to balance both these issues.

Pakistan

Editorials View Reports on Ties With Israel

Caution Urged

BK2712084193 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 27 Dec 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Don't Rush in Where ..."]

[Text] Irrespective of the domestic political controversy sought to be created around the issue, the Foreign Minister and the Foreign Office have done well to deny any informal or secret contact with Israel. The denial was triggered off by two factors. One, Islamabad's hasty and ill-conceived welcome of the 'Arafat-Rabin accord has created an impression of local official ambivalence replacing the erstwhile firm stand against recognition of the Zionist state. Two, the Israel Ambassador in New Delhi in an interview with the BBC on December 23 had claimed that diplomats of Pakistan and Israel were in contact over the issue of Israeli recognition by Islamabad.

It is not easy to dismiss the Israeli claim out of hand, as the Foreign Minister himself has disclosed initiation of an urgent inquiry to determine which Pakistani officials made the contacts disclosed by the Israelis. In fact, whatever the Foreign Minister said leads to the conclusion that the Israeli assertion is not baseless. Leaving aside the issue of who is to blame for the contacts, the Foreign Minister has lent credence to the Israeli claim of liaison with Islamabad. Further, the Foreign Office spokesman has supported the principle of rewarding aggression at least partially by supporting Israel's right to keep most of the Arab territory it now holds. He implied that Islamabad would recognise Israel under certain conditions and stated that as current chairman of the Organisation of Islamic Conference would closely consult member states on the changing situation in the Middle East.

Shorn of rhetorical cobwebs, the Foreign Office seems to be telling the public in Pakistan that the Zionists have a right to a state of their own while the Palestinians kicked out of their homes better resign to their fate. Also, he seemed to hint that Pakistan should follow suit if other OIC members recognise the Zionist entity. This seems a halfway house between those few in the country who could never openly declare support to Israel irrespective of the Arabs or the larger Muslim stand and the overwhelming support of the masses of this country for the right of the Palestinians to their entire homeland.

This apparent shift in the country's traditional stand seems based on several misconceptions. For one, the Foreign Office seems to believe that the ultra-royalist regimes tied to Washington's apron strings speak for their people and would remain firmly in control in the foreseeable future. Nothing could be farther from the truth. While governments around the world are losing credibility with their people those in the Middle East are losing it much faster than others. It is not undue pessimism that this credibility gap in the Arab world seems poised to turn increasingly violent. Lebanon, Egypt and Algeria are clear indicators of what is to come. Besides, Yasir 'Arafat's credentials as spokesman for all the Palestinians are only as wellfounded as the Zionists' claim of divine right to Palestine and their pre-eminence as the chosen people. If the PLO is the undisputed leaders of the Palestinians, the Hamas could not have been waging its struggle that in the face of continuing brutal Israeli suppression has turned into a war.

The grim scenario unfolding relentlessly is not lost upon either Israel or its supporters in the West. The desperate quest for a limited peace with 'Arafat is rooted into the appreciation of the rapidly changing situation that in just about five years from now may bear no resemblance to what is visible now. Although perspective planning is not our bureaucratic advisors' and dominant politicians force, right now it will be courting disaster to rush in where far sighted men would fear to tread. Besides, it is hard to visualise any advantage in embracing the Zionists. If anyone is arguing that the recognition would turn out to be a many splendored thing for Pakistan in international politics and military affairs, let him pay some attention to the proclamation of Israel Ambassador Afrin Davout. He told the BBC and not any Indian

newspaper that if Pakistan and Israel establish diplomatic relations, it would not be at the cost of India and also that his country's constant stand on the Kashmir issue was that the state was a part of India. If this is not an eye opener enough, let the policy makers ponder over his remarks on military matters. Davout said that Israel had given India modern military equipment which he refused to disclose and added that although there was no collaboration yet in the nuclear field, he would not rule out joint venture and cooperation in any field. It would be extremely naive for anyone to base the policy towards Israel on the hopes of getting a few military crumbs. On any issue of Pakistan versus India, it would be attempting to belie the Quran to hope that diplomatic relations would blunt Israeli hostility.

'Balanced' Approach Stressed

BK2712084793 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN OBSERVER in English 27 Dec 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Pak-Israel Contacts"]

[Text] The news item appearing in a section of the Press that there have been secret contract between Pakistan and Israel on the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries has stirred an acrimonious controversy which seems somewhat out of proportion to the significance of the event. Why we think the issue has been over blown is because after PLO-Israel Accord of Washington the situation has substantially changed in the Middle East. Even the hard-line Arab states, who may be termed as front line countries confronting Israel, are now having open and formal dialogue with Tel Aviv. Under these circumstances the news of exploratory contacts for possible future co-operation should not evoke such strong reaction. Although the party in power has angrily denied the reports and went on the offensive by charging the previous government of Nawaz Sharif of establishing contacts with Israel through its Washington envoy, we see these developments somewhat disturbing for the issue is being used by political parties to score points. This is an important subject which requires an informed debate; charged rhetoric only clouds the judgment and misleads the public.

Looking a the situation on the ground, every observer will have noticed that the Palestinians and laws, after years of hostility, realised that an outright victory is not possible for either side. They have come to the conclusion that whether they like it or not they have to live together. Many Palestinians have some reservations about Washington Accord, but the alternative to imperfect peace is endless bloodshed, suffering and dislocations. We know there are extremists in the two camps who have rejected this accord, but a majority of Israeli citizens as well as Palestinian Arabs are in favour of accommodation with Israel. Whether outsiders like the settlement or not is beside the point. If the two warring sides have decided to withhold their fire, who are we to stand in their way: Therefore the relations made by Israeli ambassador to India do not mean that the present government has committed a cardinal sin in contacting the Israeli government and the anger shown by Islamabad over these reports are equally reprehensible and in the present situation even hypocritical. That does not imply we are in favour of unilateral action in the regard and would press for establishing an Embassy in that country. The question of formal ties should not be taken literally. There should be broad-based consultation among all Islamic countries to determine the timing and the level of future links. Any unilateral move towards embracing Tel Aviv is likely to weaken the bargaining position of Arabs because recognition of Israel is one of the potent weapons in their diplomacy. We should withhold formal recognition until all hurdles in the implementation of the Accord are removed. A degree of pressure on Tel Aviv should be maintained and promise of recognition should be held out to the Jewish state so that it shows sense of urgency as well as flexibility in removing obstacles in the way of Palestinian self-rule. Having said that we should not forget that the two former enemies are reconciled now, and have chosen to co-exist despite the legacy of hatred and revenge. In the altered equation of Middle East politics, one form of contact with Israel is not violation the divine commandment. Our approach to the problem must be rational and balanced.

F-16 Deal With U.S. Supported

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[Article by Ghani Eirabie: "Dealing with the Issue of F-16s"]

[Excerpt] As the solitary Washington-based Pakistani correspondent forming part of a small group of Embassy officials and PAF [Pakistan Air Force] specialists that received ceremonial delivery of the first-ever F-16 at Fort Worth (Texas) just over a decade ago, this columnist has no hesitation in conceding that the "fighting Falcon" is perhaps the most cost-effective multi-role aircraft produced anywhere in the world. Because of mass production, it has become less costly than it used to be and because of the built-in provision for increasing sophistication, the F-16 has not been outdated. An idea of the cost-effectiveness can be had from the fact that we can buy 71 F-16s for the same price (around $1.5 billion) as 32 Mirage-2000s. Again the new generation of Falcons (drawn from the latest block-50) are equipped with far more advanced beyond-visual-range, air-to-air, air-to-ground weapons, and radar upgrades besides digital terrain navigation system and updated avionics. Consequently, there is understandable reluctance on part of the Pakistan Air Force to give up the option on the 71 F-16s already contracted and paid for.

This view, however, is contested by those who, though equally enamoured of the intrinsic superiority of the F-16, are beginning to be concerned at the rapid erosion of Pakistan's defence capability—provoking one of the critics of the "F-16 obsession" to make the snide remark:

"If Elizabeth Taylor is not available, should we condemn ourselves to perpetual celibacy?" They have been dismayed by the abrupt switch in the Clinton Administration's stance on the Pressler Amendment—from the original commitment to pursue even-handedness in enforcement of USA's non-proliferation legislation to ignominious return under the influence of the Indo-Israeli lobby, to the same old policy of cracking down exclusively against Pakistan without this time identify the victim by name.

Nevertheless, our disgust with Western duplicity should not provoke us into snapping the defence-supply relationship with USA by cancelling the F-16 deal—even while exploring the possibility of buying MiG-29s and SU-27s. For one thing, there is no last word in politics or inter-state relationship; the ultra-nationalist forces just unleashed in Russia could tear Moscow and Washington apart, necessitating a Western re-assessment of neighbourhood forces. And for another, President Clinton whose own basic instincts are sound and noble, may yet seize courage enough to discard the "weakling-mediocrity" he has surrounded himself with and adopt a genuinely even-handed policy on nuclear nonproliferation under new advisors.

A fair compromise on the payment of the next F-16 instalment should serve the interests of both sides. The compromise should entail a rational reduction in the amount of the instalment and suspension of the storage charges. Exacting the full instalment for future manufacture while not releasing—and refusing even to set a date for the release—what has already been manufactured and paid for—is grossly unfair. Also unfair is the levy of the storage charges, for the simple reason that it is not Pakistan that wants to store the aircraft on US soil; Pakistan wants to fly them out immediately. It is the US administration (under some law of its own we denounce as discriminatory) which is forcibly and wrothfully holding on to merchandise that is ours. Just as our interest lies in not cancelling the F-16 contract outright, the US self-interest also forbids dumping the deal. It would hurt America two ways. The United States economy is still languishing and cancellation of $1,500 million contract would send shock waves through the land. Thousands of workers might be laid off in the Fort Worth headquarters of the Lockheed Corporation which only recently has purchased the General Dynamics operation and is extremely anxious to make a success of it. The cancellation of the huge contract could have a fallout elsewhere too; thousands of parts go into the making of a modern aircraft and these are manufactured by sub-contractors in scores of plants across the United States. The dropping of the F-16 deal could trigger an economic chain-reaction.

The long-term impact could be just as damaging. No modern state, not even a superpower, can afford to forget, especially after seeing the fate of the Soviet Union, that in the last analysis, it owes its clout to its economic strength, which in turn, is determined by its ability to sell what it produces. But its ability to sell is vastly compromised by suspicions, frequently well-based, that even its commercial sales commitments are subject to its strategic perceptions. Ultimately that begins to hurt a country's commercial credibility.

That is precisely what has happened in the case of the United States. Lot of buyers or potential buyers think twice over before staking their fundamental security interests on the "reliability" of the United States as producer of a new weapons system. Customers do not want to be left hanging in mid-air in a crunch sometimes by a solitary US Senator deciding as chairman of a Congressional panel whether committed supplies of critical equipment are to be allowed to go through or not. [passage omitted]

Editorial Views Priorities in Relations With PRC

BK2712084393 Islamabad THE NATION in English 27 Dec 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Visit to China"]

[Text] Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto would be off to China today. It would be the third neighbour, and for Pakistan the most important one, she is calling on. Since her last visit to China, there are quite a few bilateral matters on which she has to catch up. To begin with, a process of defrosting between China and India has started. A negative fallout of it is of a lot more troops becoming available to India for deployment against Pakistan. With the reduction of tension on the NEFA front against China, as a result of the treaty signed between China and India, India is feeling free to withdraw its troops from that front and bring them to Kashmir and other places. On the positive side, China could, if it felt so inclined, play a role now in Pakistan-India disputes. That role was denied to it earlier because of its stand-off on NEFA. Then there is the subject of arms supplies from China. The U.S. had particularly objected to, what it alleged to be, violation by China of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). China is not a signatory to the MTCR treaty and should, therefore, have been free to sell its missiles to any country, but its supply of M-11 missiles to Pakistan, if any, was not violative of that treaty insofar as those missiles were of the permissible range. As against that India has already developed intercontinental missiles of far greater range and is in the process of developing more with the help of Russian technology. Both China and Pakistan having been subjected to sanctions by the U.S. on the basis of an intelligence report, that is said to be quite inaccurate, may have to make common cause against those unjustified sanctions.

Besides these more visible issues, there are, of course, a large number of other problems in which China's help could be requested. Kashmir is on the top of that agenda. Nuclear non-proliferation on a regional basis is another, particularly in view of the recent UN resolution on non-proliferation in South Asia. Then there is the on-going cooperation between the two countries in matters

of arms manufacturing, particularly in the manufacture of tanks and light aircraft. The Chinese help in the energy sector, in view of the agreement signed during the PPP's last stint in power, about 300 MW nuclear power plant, is likely to come up for review, etc. The PM's participation in the Commonwealth Conference in Cyprus, followed by her visits to Iran, Turkey and now to China and then to North Korea, may appear to be modest steps to take Pakistan out of international isolation, but these steps are obviously necessary. It is a good beginning. And one is happy that it has been made fairly early during the tenure of the present government.

Chinese Company To Build Highway

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[Text] A Chinese construction company, China Petroleum Engineering Corporation, will construct Section B-12 of the Indus Highway at the cost of rupees 1.26 billion. An agreement to this effect was signed in Islamabad today by the Chinese corporation's vice president and the chairman of National Highways Authority. The construction of the Indus Highway will go a long way in promoting friendly relations between the two countries.

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